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THE NEW FOREST.

A NOVEL.

BY THE

AUTHOR OF "BRAMBLETYE HOUSE," &c.

— "This boy is forest-born,
And hath been tutored in the rudiments
Of desperate studies."

AS YOU LIKE IT.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. II.

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HENRY COLBURN, NEW BURLINGTON STREET.

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THE NEW FOREST.

CHAPTER I.

Go to, go to ;

You have known what you should not.

SHAKSPEARE.

GIDEON Welbeck, or Justice Welbeck, as he was commonly called in that part of Hampshire, was a tall, gaunt, bony figure, though his height was diminished by a considerable stoop in the shoulders, which was the only mark of decrepitude about him, his step being vigorous, and his limbs sinewy and strong. A tuft of grey hair ran round the back of his bald head, which had been finely formed by nature, though his countenance now exhibited an arena in which

the passions had manifestly been waging a long and obstinate war. Furrowed and strongly marked, it had been not unaptly compared by one of his neighbours to a menagerie, in which all sorts of wild beasts were collected; but, amidst its fiercer or more melancholy traits, for he was often affected by a hypochondriacal prostration of spirits, his face never lost its character of covetousness distinctly conveyed in the thin, compressed lips, and the eager, hungry, grasping look of his bright, restless eyes, which pounced upon their object like a vulture upon its prey. Strictly speaking, he was not avaricious; for, though sordid in his notions, and penurious in his habits, there was no actual misery—nothing squalid either in his appearance or his establishment; while upon his beloved daughter he would have lavished every shilling he was worth, had she required it at his hands. According to his own views, his mode of living was only economical: compared with his great wealth, it was unquestionably mean and niggardly; but still he had a ready excuse for his parsimony,—he did not indulge it on his own

account, but on Emily's. Every thing was for her. He had determined to make her a great fortune;—he had set his heart upon her aggrandizement;—she should be the wealthiest bride, or the richest heiress in the country;—for himself he cared nothing. Thus, by a subtle but common operation of self-love, did he endeavour to convert a failing into a virtue, and disguise his covetousness under the mask of paternal affection. In his earlier days, he had been an ardent admirer of the old dramatists, for whose writings he still retained his taste; perhaps because the conflict of fierce turbulent passions which they presented was congenial to his distempered mind, perhaps because he sympathized with their frequently disparaging and misanthropical views of human nature. Under the influence of his casual melancholy, he was generally taciturn, though sometimes, making a resolute effort to escape from it, he would force himself to converse, and display an ease and animation that might have been mistaken for natural cheerfulness. Stern, moody, and irritable as he was, his demeanour towards Emily

was uniformly fond, almost to doating. She was the only person that knew how to manage him, or retained any influence over him ; and as she was aware of this fact, as well as of her parent's infirmities, she never willingly quitted him. Her recent visit to Southampton had been made at his especial desire ; for, notwithstanding his great wealth, he would not suffer Emily to omit any opportunity of securing, by her personal attentions, the reversion of her aunt's little property.

Over the porch, at the principal entrance of the house, was a small apartment, almost constantly occupied by Welbeck. From the window, he could obtain a view over the park in front of the mansion ; while the door communicated with a gallery that passed through the whole building, terminating at the farther extremity in a bow-window, whence he could equally command all that might approach the back of the premises. In the closet of this room, as well as in that of his bed-chamber, he constantly kept loaded fire-arms, which he regularly inspected every day, and then deposited

them on a shelf, generally lumbered with old plays, or such law books as had reference to the duties of a magistrate.

It was his custom to watch always the arrival of the post, tearing open his letters, and then devouring the newspapers, with an intense eagerness that seemed rather to be the result of misgiving and trepidation, than of mere curiosity, however keen. On the morning in question, after having read his letters and ran through the papers, not omitting a single advertisement, he rang a bell that communicated with the sitting-room of his daughter, who immediately obeyed the summons.

“ Emy, my darling,” he cried, with a look of unusual animation, “ here is a letter from the Earl of Latchmore, who with his son and heir, young Fawley, purposes calling here this morning, and would have done so sooner, but that he knew not you had returned from Southampton. This youth, the future Earl, cannot live, you see, long away from you. I could read his secret wishes, although you saw them not; and now in this written paper—here in this precious

document, the blessed fulfiller of my cherished hopes,—the Earl formally solicits that his son may be admitted as your suitor. This is a happy day ! A day ? alas ! I cannot answer for a whole day, but it is, at least, a happy hour, since it promises the great consummation for which I have been toiling through my life ; and, O God ! what a wretched life has it been ! Away with all such thoughts ! begone ! avaunt ! Is not Fawley a comely and a graceful youth ?”

“ Oh, my dear father ! why will you talk thus ?” exclaimed the blushing Emily, afraid to awaken his dormant passions, which were usually maddened by opposition to his will, and yet sickening at the very thought of an union with Fawley, whose handsome form and high rank little atoned in her estimation for his frivolous and dissipated character : “ Why should I marry at all, and what can have persuaded Lord Fawley, who has scarcely seen me half a dozen times—”

“ What can have persuaded ?” interposed Welbeck ; “ his own admiration and his father’s good advice. And what, you will ask me, can

have influenced the Earl to this determination? I will tell you, Emy, for I see through these men, and make them my tools while they think I am their dupe. Lord Latchmore has chosen to impoverish himself by gambling and electioneering; his vast estates in Hampshire and Sussex are only nominally his—the title-deeds are in my strong-room—they are mortgaged to me—they are mine—all, all, all!—” (his eyes sparkled, while his hands opened and clutched together as he spoke,) “and he must either leave Fawley a beggar, or enable him to recover his patrimony by marrying him to the daughter and sole heiress of the mortgagee.”

“And what could I expect in uniting myself with a man for whom I have no affection, and who is only impelled to offer me his hand by motives which render him unworthy of it?”

“You need neither expect nor desire more than you are sure of finding—rank, station, consequence, power, and wealth, which wealth I will take care so to secure to you, that it shall be beyond the reach of either the spendthrift Earl or his son. Then will you be able to

spurn and trample upon all those who do not render homage to your superiority. You start, you recoil from an arrogance and tyranny so uncongenial to your meekness. Lookye, Emy, this is a hateful, treacherous, villanous, irreclaimable world. You must either be its master or its slave. If you consent to be the latter, every one will delight in crushing you into the dust: if you can accomplish the former, and they who have gold have already secured their dominion over mankind, you must govern with a rod of iron. There are but two great classes in existence—fools and knaves, or in other words, victims and victors.”

“If I have no alternative, I hope I may be ranked among the fools,” said Emily, with a faint smile, though she was far from finding any thing pleasant in her father’s splenetic and misanthropical doctrines.

“Among the dupes, my dear Emy, you may certainly be at present numbered. I have willingly given you the means of indulging your bounties, that when you discover, as you soon must, the hatefulness of those upon whom you

have been lavishing your favours, and the hideous ingratitude of the world, you may be the more effectually cured of your infatuation, and become, like me, a scorner of your fellow-creatures. He who confers an obligation makes, perhaps, one friend, though even this is uncertain, and twenty enemies; and he would be playing an equally losing game if their numbers were equal, since the feeling of revenge is twenty times stronger than that of gratitude. All men are selfish and intractable. Like walnut-trees, they will only shower down their fruits upon those who beat and cudgel them, and in this they do but adapt themselves to all the analogies of nature. Earth herself only yields her wealth to those who plough her bosom and harrow it with iron; she gives a richer fragrance when she has been just lashed by an angry storm of rain; the flowers that we crush beneath our feet reward us with a more aromatic incense; let us then practise the lessons that are taught us, let us conform the moral to the physical system, sparing no harshness that may minister to our own gratification or aggrandisement, making

no distinctions between friend or foe, than which no terms are more easily convertible, but imitating the subtle bee, who plunders honey alike from the healing balm and the noxious hemlock."

"I cannot argue with you, my dearest father! I cannot feel—I cannot even understand your doctrines; but to recur to a subject which I can feel, and most painfully too—why should I marry at all, why would you force me to leave you? Remember how precarious is your health: who shall tend you, what will become of you, who will be your nurse, what can you do when I am gone?"

"Die!" shouted Welbeck with one of those fearful alterations of look and feeling to which he was subject; "ay, and die content, come what will hereafter, when I see that the demon who has lured me on has not altogether betrayed my hopes, but that my daughter, she for whom I have sacrificed myself, sits in coroneted state, in pomp, and wealth, and glory amid the nobles of the land. To be twice disappointed, to lose that last throw upon which I have

staked my heart, my soul, would indeed make earth a hell to me."

There was a silence of some minutes, during which Welbeck remained plunged in a gloomy struggling reverie, Emily herself, great as was her influence over him, fearing to interrupt it, until she might mark some encouraging relaxation of his convulsed features. Making at length a violent effort, he seemed to shake off the waking night-mare that oppressed him, and continued with a more animated look and voice, "Go then, my child, and prepare to receive our titled visitants. They are coming to-day, this very morning; here is the Earl's letter, the precious document and pledge that my hopes shall not again be blasted. Begone, and array yourself in such rich and costly fashion as may become my heiress, and the future Countess of Latchmore. Where are my monies gone? I have denied you nothing. Let me then see you more honourably clad: these are plebeian garments; away with them! And wear not any longer those meek and pensive looks, but lift up your countenance, and let your haughty eye seem

conscious of your glittering vestiture and your aspiring hopes. Begone! and remember that I would have you ‘radiant with gold, and gemmed with jewelry.’ ”

In these excited moods, opposition did but irritate Welbeck, almost to frenzy; whereas, if he were soothed by a seeming acquiescence, he was apt presently to forget all that he had been saying, and to think no more about it. This Emily well knew, and making, therefore, a show of compliance, she embraced her father, put a play-book into his hand, which generally assisted in composing him, and quitted the apartment.

“Hah!” exclaimed Welbeck, starting back as he opened the volume; “is this a Virgilian lot? have I stumbled upon this ominous page to be reminded that I may have been imitating the conduct of Sir Giles Overreach only to share his final doom? If one single disappointment drove him to madness, what would a double misery of the like nature entail upon me? But no; Emily will never prove a Mar-

garet, nor am I a remorseless villain like Sir Giles. What the law would give me I have, indeed, inexorably grasped ; but between others, and acting as a magistrate, my judgments have been just and unimpeachable. Wretch that I am ! let me not lay this flattering unction to my soul. Are not these hands stained with innocent—O merciful heaven ! have I not the life of a fellow-creature to answer for?—Hah ! what noise is that ? some one approaches.”

He ran to the window, and beholding a vehicle driving up to the house, made one of those instant and vehement efforts which enabled him to subdue his mind, even in its most tempestuous workings, and to throw an air of stern composure over his volcanic countenance. The visitants, as he conjectured, might be coming upon some official business ; he descended immediately into the parlour to receive them, for it formed a curious contradiction in his character that, while he affected to despise all the civil obligations of life, he piqued himself upon the

diligent and upright discharge of his magisterial duties, and even derived a secret pleasure from the performance of this solitary virtue.

The party he had seen approaching proved to be Penguin and Henry, whom he received with a grave courtesy, though he could not repress a slight feeling of impatience, when he found that they came upon a mere visit of ceremony for the purpose of introducing Henry as one who was likely to become a neighbour. This, however, he did not externally manifest, for Welbeck could occasionally render himself agreeable, and was generally observant of the superficial modes of politeness, after a somewhat formal and antiquated fashion, unless when driven from his guard by one of those whirlwinds of sudden passion which sometimes assailed him. Only a few minutes had elapsed when Emily, not knowing that any visitants had arrived, entered the room for the purpose of putting some question to her father. On perceiving Henry she stopped, blushed deeply, cast down her eyes in evident confusion, and falteringly saluted him by his name, after which she noticed Penguin,

and then sank into a chair, not before she had need of its support.

“How, Emy! do you know this gentleman?” cried her father, while his eager eyes shot from one to the other with a suspicious glance.

“I was not aware that you had any one with you,” said Emily, conscious that she was confused, and eager to account for it: “I little expected ever to see Mr. Melcomb again—he is a friend of my aunt Fleming’s, lodged in the same house with her at Southampton, and laid her under much obligation by his polite attentions.”

“Because he imagined her dying, I suppose, and was scheming for a legacy,” thought Welbeck to himself, ever assigning mercenary motives to actions that wore any appearance of benevolence. A whisper from Penguin, however, that his friend was a young man of fortune, dissipated this idea, and he began to contemplate Henry with that respectful *esprit de corps* which rich men, ever willing to consider wealth as an evidence of superiority, generally feel towards one another. Anxious to introduce himself into

society as widely as possible, it was the geologist's object to be upon good terms with all men, and in alluding, therefore, to the proposed suppression of the fair, the prevalent topic of conversation at that moment, he expressed a hope that Mr. Welbeck, as lord of the manor, would take care to be fully reimbursed by the neighbourhood for the loss of stallage and duties; signifying a great desire to know their average amount, that he might calculate the proportion he would himself have to pay, although he was principally actuated by his habitual curiosity and prying disposition.

Welbeck rang the bell, and desired that Wiverley might be sent to him with the manor-age-book, when shortly after there appeared a staid, formal-looking little man in rusty black, whom the justice called his clerk, but who officiated besides as steward, bailiff, and general factotum. "Wiverley," said the magistrate, "I told you that there was a talk of suppressing our fair, and if the neighbours wish it, I myself care not a button about the matter, provided I have full compensation. This gentle-

man is desirous of knowing the amount of my profits, *communibus annis*, and I have sent for you that you may show him the account." So saying he took and unclasped the book, and turning over its fairly-written pages—for every thing appertaining to Welbeck was methodical and accurate even to a fraction—ran over to himself the headings of the different leaves—"Fines, fees, and heriots; quit-rents; timber-account; agistment of cattle; commissioners account for gravel; demesne account."—"Your worship," interposed Wiverley with a respectful bow, "will find the statute-fair account at folio one hundred and two." Welbeck turned to it, and Penguin, himself a keen man of business, was not a little amused by the avidity of the eager rapacious master and the craftiness of the servile clerk, as, by mutual observations and calculations, they sought to enhance the value of the rights to be ceded.

During this discussion, Emily and Henry, unobserved by the others, had retired to a window, where, in a *tête-à-tête*, they were enjoying themselves in mutual inquiries, and an inter-

change of sentiments, not less congenial to the character of the speakers, than opposite to the sordid nature of the colloquy that was going on in the middle of the room. Their interview was not long, but the looks and tones, both of Emily and Henry, attested the delight with which they again met after a separation, which both parties had apprehended to be a final one.

While Welbeck was busily employed in calculating the rate of increase in the stallage during the last twenty years, the old sharp-toned clock in the front of the house struck the hour, a sound which instantly recalled his money-wandering thoughts to the expected visit from the peer. Hastily shutting the manorage-book, and returning it to Wiverley, he started up, exclaiming, "Hah! I had almost forgotten—Mr. Penguin, Mr. Melcomb, you must excuse me, I have urgent business that may not be deferred. Good morning, gentlemen, good morning; come, Emy, my child, you will be too late."

With these words he took his daughter's arm, quitted the room, and hurried her along

the gallery, exclaiming, as he led her towards her chamber, "Do justice to yourself, Emy; assume a loftier look; walk and dress like a princess, for you shall have a royal portion. This match will justify my past life—to myself, at least, if not to heaven; and for the future I must e'en endure it as I may."

CHAPTER II.

“ Then meet her and perish !” the Syren cried,
And she plunged deep down in the foaming tide,
And she reared again her awful form,
And she woke the winds, and she hurl’d the storm.

G. F. RICHARDSON.

AFTER having quitted the manor-house, Henry accompanied Penguin, agreeably to his promise, to view the bed of shells, from which the geologist selected numerous specimens for his museum, when they returned together to Grotto-house, and Henry, having taken an early dinner with his friend, set out on foot to make his way back to Thaxted. His thoughts being occupied with Emily, and the strange stories he had heard of her father, he wandered inadvertently from the right path, and, finding himself in a lane, entered a pretty-looking

cottage to inquire his way. It was occupied by an old man named Nettletop, who, as well as his wife, had formerly lived at the Manor-house, with Cyril Welbeck, the last squire. Henry found this ancient couple in great trouble on account of the alarming disappearance of their nephew Hodge, who lived at the cottage, but had been missing for two days, without their having been able to obtain any tidings of him whatever. While the old man was telling his story, Tony, the waiter of the George, burst into the room, his heated countenance seeming to testify that he had run all the way to communicate some important intelligence. Henry's first inquiry was, whether Hodge had been found, whether he had returned to Farmer Patching's, where he worked?

"No; nor he baint likely to return for one while," said Tony; "I know all about 'un, danged if I don't, and I ha' run over just to tell Master Nettletop——"

"What has become of him?" inquired Henry, with some impatience.

“ Why, Sir, lookee here, I ’ll tell you the whole story how it happened. I were sent over yesterday morning by daylight to fetch half a load o’ hay from Farmer Patching, so I pops old Ball into the cart, and off I goes; and when I be got there, I goes right into the farmer’s ox-stable, and who should come in, Master Nettle-top, but your nevy Hodge, and he pats and kisses every one of the oxen that he always had to plough with, in such a loving way like, that I couldn’t help saying to myself, Icod ! says I, I ’d rather be a kissing of Molly Stubbs. So then he calls to Giles; ‘ Giles,’ says he, ‘ thee and me sha’n’t never plough together agin; thee’st a kind-hearted goadsman as ever went to field: now do ye, lad, when I be gone, and far away, do ye be kind to the poor dumb beasts, and above all thee mustn’t never goad this here fore hand ox, ’cause he be old, and still wrung in the back, tho’ I ha’ rubbed it night and morning with stuff.’ And then he kissed the brute beast agin, and sure as ever you ’re standing there, Master Nettle-top, there were a tear fell from his eye, danged if there warn’t !”

“ But what has all this to do with Hodge ? What has become of him ? where has he gone to ? why does he not return home ? ” simultaneously inquired both Henry and Nettletop.

“ Why, I were just coming to that, so don’t ye hurry a body. ‘ Tony,’ says he to I, ‘ it ’s hard to part from these poor beasts, a’ter I ha’ walked so long behind ’em at the plough-stilt ; but it ’s all along o’ Lucy Haselgrove that I be going away from these parts altogether. A’ter her and me ha’ kept company so long, and ’twere settled we were soon to be axed in church, to go and cast me off for good and all, and tell me she were going to be married to a fine gemman ! I couldn’t stop here, Tony, to see such falsehood, ’twould break my heart, ’twould indeed.’ And then he spoke thick, and drunkyl-like, and coughed, and seemed to swallow down a summat in his throat, and wiped his eye with his frock-sleeve, and a’ter a while, he do go on again. ‘ Tony,’ says he, ‘ my heart were so full when I left the cottage, that I forgot one thing, and so, when you go that way, do ye tell uncle, that if he ’ll take up the board in

the loft, he'll find a mouse-trap, and in the mouse-trap an old stocking, and in the old stocking summat that may comfort 'n when I be far away ; and tell 'n, I hadn't the heart to wish 'n good-by, but that I sent my duty both to he and the old woman, and that ye heard me say, bless 'em ! bless 'em ! God bless 'em both !' And then he turned right round, winking his eyes all the time, as if he had got a fly in 'em, and ran out of the stable, and that was the last I ever see of 'n."

" Heart alive ! who ever heard tell such a cock-and-bull tale as this ?" cried Nettletop : " Where be the lad a'ter all ?"

" Did you not say you knew what had become of him ?" inquired Henry.

" And baint I coming to it, if thee doesn't hurry the life and breath out of a chap's body. Well, I said that was the last ever I see of 'n, and so it were ; but Phil, the postman, when he called at the George this morning, says he, ' What has made Old Nettletop's nevy go for a sodger ?' says he. ' I met 'n on the road with a cockade in 's hat, along with some more on 'em,

and a sargeant, and I larnt they wouldn't take'n afore a Thaxted magistrate to be sworn, fear he should change his mind, but were marching him off to Christchurch.'"

"Lord ha' mercy upon us!" ejaculated Nettletop, clasping his hands together; "be my poor boy gone for a sodger?"

"So he was, as upright as any sodger," cried the superannuated old woman, catching the word, though she seemed to have entirely lost the import of what had been passing. "Ah, Sir, when he be walking between the plough-stilts, and holding down the coulter in the stiffest soil, as if it were no heavier than a flail, he do look for all the world like a king, so he do. Who talked o' Lucy Hazelgrove? She ha' worked a smock-frock for our Hodge in crimson worsted, with true-lovers knots and hearts; and Hodge be making up a purse for the wedding, for he told me so himself, the very day the bees swarmed in our garden."

"She be a wicked hussy to ha' served our Hodge this trick," said Nettletop; "but she were always a giddy, silly wench, too proud of

her pretty face by half. Ods heartlikins ! only to think of our poor Hodge being gone for a sodger ! Dear, dear ! gone for a sodger ! I wonder whether the poor lad will wear a blue jacket or a red 'n." The old man had appeared shocked at the first intelligence, but as his feelings had been rendered too torpid by age to retain more than a temporary susceptibility, they soon evaporated in some such inane subject of wonderment as that which he had just expressed ; while his imbecile dame continued to ply her wheel, and with her cracked voice began muttering to herself, in an attempt at an old song, " A sodger for me ! a sodger for me !"

Tony having at length delivered himself of all his intelligence might now have withdrawn ; but there was still one subject in which he took a much deeper interest than in the fate of Hodge, or its probable effect upon his relations ; and that was the mysterious mouse-trap enclosing the old stocking. He had no sooner recalled attention to this object, than Henry proposed that they should proceed in search of it, which

was accordingly done: it was presently discovered, and upon unrolling the careful involution, and disentangling the knots of the old stocking, it was found to contain three seven-shilling pieces, and a tolerably numerous collection of half-crowns, shillings, and sixpences, all of which had been hoarded up by Hodge against his marriage with Lucy.

“Poor lad! poor lad!” cried Nettletop, again seeming to be affected by this fresh proof of his nephew’s forethought and kindness of heart—“Thee hasn’t left another in all the parish like thee, and this here money will be but cold comfort for my old mistress and me when thee bee’st far away.” Notwithstanding which averment, he counted it twice over, tied it up again very carefully, and deposited it in his pocket.

“Well! if I had such a heap o’ shillings as them,” said Tony, “and Molly Stubbs were to sarve me the same sauce, I wouldn’t go for a soldier, danged if ’ood!—I wonder how many quarts all that would by!—but, howsomdever, that ’s no odds; I must post back to the

George, or else I shall catch it." With these words he set off towards Thaxted; and Henry, having stayed to suggest such topics of consolation as might come in aid of the silver, which latter, however, was probably the most effectual solace in old Nettletop's estimation, returned to his inn, musing as he walked upon the occurrences of the day.

These thoughts assailed him with such importunity during the night that they broke his slumbers; even his interest in Emily's fate, deep as it was, yielded for the moment to the more intense anxiety awakened by the unfortunate Hodge. Henry was not one of those whose feelings are sluggish, if not altogether obtuse, unless the object that solicits them be among the better classes of society. On the contrary, all his sympathies were with the poor; and seeing in this young peasant a susceptibility of heart, and generosity of disposition, which would do honour to any rank; while the disappointment that had driven him to the desperate act of enlisting, entitled him to the deepest commiseration, he could not banish him

from his mind. He had, moreover, an especial horror of the profession of a soldier; Hodge appeared to him infinitely too meritorious a personage to be thus sacrificed, and the result of these reflections was a determination to save him if possible from such a fate. If he could get access to the serjeant before his recruit had taken the oaths, a bribe seemed likely to effect this object without difficulty, and with the view of reaching Christchurch in good time, he got up while it was still dark, filled his purse with gold, and set off in the direction of the sea, making sure that he should reach the town in question by following the line of the coast.

Animated by the hope of succeeding in his benevolent object, and unvisited by any of those apprehensions which might have been excusable in a defenceless man traversing so lawless a district in the dark, he pursued his way at a rapid pace and with a stout heart, not sorry, however, at length to see the morning break, since it enabled him to ascertain that he was following the coasting road, which he

found had now brought him close to the sea. He was congratulating himself that the light would preserve him from all danger of a tumble over the broken cliffs, with which the coast was now beginning to be skirted, and had halted for a moment at the edge of a steep gap leading down to the beach, when his ears were startled with a piercing shriek, that seemed to proceed from a female. It was the scream uttered by Mary when she had first discovered George bleeding upon the crag in the midst of the waters.

Eagerly throwing his eyes in the direction of the cry, Henry perceived something that resembled a human form upon the top of the detached rock, and rushing down the gap he plunged into the waves to render whatever succour might be in his power. Always energetic in the cause of humanity, he reached the crag in a few seconds. A single glance seemed to reveal to him the whole truth. He beheld a bleeding and disabled fainting fellow-creature about to perish miserably from the advance of the waters, and instantly en-

deavoured to lift him upon his own shoulders, that he might carry him to the shore. Reviving for a moment as his head was raised for this purpose, George uttered a deep groan, pointed to the opposite side of the crag, ejaculated in a hollow voice — “Save her ! Save her !” and again sank down.

With a horror that made the blood thrill in his veins, Henry now first perceived the body of a female lying in the water beneath the farther side of the rock. In a moment it was raised and in his arms ;—young and vigorous, he made nothing of his burthen, but scrambling to the shore, and speeding up the gap, he ran to a small public-house which he had previously passed, rushed into the door which had that moment been opened, passed into a room, deposited Mary upon the table, and having hastily given the astonished woman of the house orders to light a fire in the apartment, and immediately adopt such other measures as are usual in attempting the recovery of persons apparently drowned, he hurried back to the sea.

Again did he win his rapid way to the crag,

neither his strength nor his activity having suffered any diminution from his exertions. The wounded man was thrown speedily over his shoulders and borne in safety to the shore, but so different did Henry find the weight of his present burthen, that he began to doubt his ability to carry him up the gap, and as far as the public-house, without a loss of time that might be better occupied in endeavouring to procure immediate professional aid for both the sufferers. Placing George, therefore, upon the sand, beyond the reach of the tide, he prepared to run over to the village of Hordle, which he had observed at no great distance, in order to procure whatever assistance the place might afford. On reaching the top of the gap with this intention, he perceived Mary's horse, from which she had hastily dismounted when she flew to George's succour. The animal, which was quietly grazing, suffered itself to be secured; Henry threw himself upon its back, galloped over to Hordle, and desiring the village practitioner to provide himself with such apparatus as might be necessary, resigned the

horse to him, described the spot where the sufferers had been left, desiring him to give his first attentions to the female, whose case seemed to be the most desperate, implored him to use dispatch, and promised to follow with as much speed as his strength would allow.

It will be recollected that the Captain of the smugglers, after the night affray upon the beach, had remounted his mare, and ridden off in the direction of Milford, some one having told him that George, of whose wound he was at that time ignorant, had retreated thither. On his route he learned from one of his mounted comrades, who had fled sooner from the scene of action, that George, in covering the Captain, had received a shot in the leg, and he concluded must have been taken prisoner, as he was certainly disabled, and could only crawl a little way. "Start my timbers!" cried the Captain indignantly, "and were you such a chicken-hearted chap as to sneak out of fire without telling me, or trying to bring him off yourself? George wounded, and in covering me, too! They shall have my heart's blood 'fore they nab

him ; ay, 'fore they touch a hair of his head !” So saying, he suddenly turned his mare, clapped spurs to her sides, and galloped back, striking down to the shore as he approached Hordle. His quick eye, accustomed to scrutinize the smallest object, soon detected George lying upon the beach, his looks as well as his blood-stained clothes sufficiently attesting the truth of his reported wound. “ George, my brave fellow !” he ejaculated, as he threw himself from his horse, and wrung his hand ; “ what cheer, boy, what cheer ? Founder the Longsplice ! if I hadn’t rather they should ha’ put a bit o’ lead into my hide than into thine, any night o’ the whole year ! Curse thee, George, for a noble-hearted fellow ! what made thee go for to cover me ? But cheer up, lad, cheer up, we’ll soon get thy leg spliced ; so heave a-head a bit, while I clap thee on black Bess’s back, and I’ll presently get thee stowed away in safety, never fear. Now, George, gently my brave lad, gently.”

“ Leave me, leave me !” ejaculated the wounded man in a faint and hollow voice ; “ look to

Mary!—up the gap! up the gap! Mary is drowned!”

“Who?—what!—Polly drowned!” shouted the father, letting George fall from his arms, while the blood rushed to his face, distending every vein, as he stood for a moment transfixed with open mouth and staring eyes in speechless agony. George waved his hand towards the gap, and the Captain, suddenly recovering himself at the signal, sprung like a maniac upon his horse, urged the panting beast full speed up the gap, and galloping to the public-house, exclaimed in a gasping voice, as he jumped to the ground, “Is Polly here? where’s my Polly? Show her to me this moment, or by God! I’ll blow your brains out!”

“Lord bless us, Sir!” cried the landlady, terrified at his wild looks and menacing words, “if you mean the poor young woman that’s drowned, you come too late; it’s all over, poor soul, all over! she was as dead as a door-nail, and as cold as a stone, when they brought her in; so I left the body upon the parlour-table, where the young gentleman laid it, for I’m a

decent woman, Sir, and I hope I know better than to go and worry and disturb a Christian corpse. And besides, Sir, nobody has a right to interfere, you know, before the coroner sits down upon the body."

Exclusively of that horror of approaching a corpse which is felt with peculiar force by the lower orders, the landlady, a timid, ignorant woman, who had recently arrived from the interior to take possession of the inn, was fearful of compromising herself by any mistakes, and she had no sooner, therefore, seen Mary's ghastly countenance, and touched her clay-cold flesh, than concluding her to be dead beyond all possibility of recovery, she recoiled from the body, hurried out of the room, and never thought of obeying any of the directions she had received from Henry.

"Where? where?" ejaculated with breathless eagerness, was all the notice that the Captain took of her speech. She pointed with her finger to a door, and he precipitated himself, without uttering another word, into the room. The large black mastiff which had accompanied the

smugglers, and had been taken by a part of them into the interior with one of the first cart-loads dispatched from the coast, having at this period wandered back, apparently in search of his master, had seen him dismounting at the public-house, and had testified his joy by leaping and barking vociferously around him. Too much agonized, however, to bestow a word, or even a look, upon his dog, the Captain rushed into the house, the poor animal, instantly sobered by such an unusual neglect, following him silently, and with a disappointed air, into the apartment. The shutters not having been opened, the candle, which the landlady in her hasty retreat had left upon the high mantelshelf, threw down a particularly ghastly and sepulchral light upon the pallid features of Mary, as she lay extended with closed eyes upon the table beneath, one arm hanging lifelessly down, so that the hand rested on the sanded floor; her long wet locks scattered about in confusion, seeming by their sable hue to impart an additional wanness to her alabaster face; and her dripping garments, as they clung to her

form, giving it altogether the appearance of a sculptured monumental figure.

“Polly!” ejaculated the father in a hoarse whisper, as he bent over and fixed his straining eyes upon his child. “Polly!” he repeated, after a short pause, raising his voice to a louder, shuddering whisper. “Polly!” he again exclaimed, in an eager passionate cry, as if the loudness of his summons could awaken her from her apparent slumber. He waited for a brief space, breathless with agonized expectation. All was still and silent. He raised her pendent hand from the floor, and pressed it for a second in both of his own; but its chilling coldness seeming to give him certain assurance of her death, he let it suddenly go with a slight spasm, and it fell upon the deal table, making a rattling noise that thrilled through his very heart. But he would not believe his own sensations; he would not yield to misgivings of so withering, so desolating a nature; and drawing still nearer, he placed his hands beside her cheeks, and pressing them gently, applied his lips to her’s. He felt no breath, no motion; all was cold as if

iced over by death ; and the conviction that his daughter was indeed no more, appeared now for the first time to have reached him.

Then was to be seen the silent though terrible struggle of a father, resolute and rugged in his nature, scorning to be overcome by any extremity of affliction, and yet too deeply affectionate not to feel that in the deprivation of his beloved and only child he had lost every thing that made life desirable. As he drew in a long breath, his chest heaved and expanded till it burst the button of his waistcoat; the perspiration started from his forehead, and in spite of the forcible compression of his mouth, he could not so far clench his features as to prevent their being slightly convulsed. He sank into a chair, and made one or two efforts to speak, as if to derive some sort of consolation even from the sound of his own voice ; but finding that he could not command himself enough to articulate, he remained for some time gazing in heart-stricken silence upon the sad spectacle before him ; the mastiff, as if conscious that his master

was in deep distress, crouching, still and motionless at his feet, with his eyes riveted inquiringly upon his face. Deriving, at length, a kind of sullen resignation from despair, the father muttered to himself—"It 's no use being cast down and dumb-founded—a brave man should always bear up—we must all die—shall die myself, and don't care now how soon.—Poor girl!—poor dear child ! if I could ha' saved thee, I'd ha' given—ay, I 'd ha' had both my arms twisted right out o' the shoulder socket. It 's no use breaking one's heart for anything; and yet a fellow can't help feeling; especially when one thinks what a good, brave, noble——" The recollection of his daughter's many claims to his affection again overcame him; his voice faltered, the muscles of his face were again convulsed, he ceased to speak, and two or three large tear-drops, rolling down his cheeks in spite of himself, fell upon the back of the dog. In an instant the animal started upon its legs, wagged its tail, and uttering a gentle, whining cry, rubbed itself against its master, as if to comfort him, or obtain some share of

his notice, in both which objects, however, he was utterly unsuccessful.

Some little time had thus elapsed, when two maid-servants, who, in the belief that they were in the house of death and of mourning, had been stealing about upon tip-toe, whispering earnestly to one another, without daring to enter the apartment in which the body was deposited, stole softly to the door, half-opened it, and stood gazing with sorrowing looks upon the mournful sight before them. In the hope of consoling the disconsolate father, one of them observed to the other, in a whisper sufficiently loud to be overheard, that she understood the Doctor had been sent for, and that she had heard of instances where persons had been recovered after being a long time under water ; a remark which, however well-meant, was far from answering its intended purpose.

“ Avast ! away with ye ! heave off, stupid wench ! and don’t stand there jabbering and telling lies ! ” shouted the Captain, rendered irritable by his grief, and apparently glad of any object that might turn his thoughts, however

momentarily, from the appalling scene before him. "She's dead, I tell ye, dead as a marlin-spike: d'ye think I don't know a drowned body, when I've seen scores on 'em?" He waved his hand impatiently, the dog, imagining from his angry tones and gestures that there was some enemy at the door, leaped towards it with flashing eyes, bristling mane, unsheathed teeth, and such a menacing snarl, that the maids hastily closed the door and ran away, when the Captain, relapsing into his former attitude, was left to his own sad meditations.

These were presently interrupted by the sound of a horse's feet, and a bustling in the house; soon after which the door was again opened, and the village apothecary, whom Henry had dispatched, entered the room, followed by the landlady and assistants. As the medical man, after having ordered the fire to be lighted, declared to the several curious gazers, who were pressing behind, that no one must remain in the apartment, except the landlady and her female assistants, the Captain, who had now sunk into a sullen stupor of despair, suffered himself to

be led unresistingly into a small back-parlour, where he was left with no other companion than his silent, crest-fallen mastiff, the bystanders respecting his grief too much to intrude upon his privacy.

Benumbed, as his faculties were for the moment, they soon recovered their sensitiveness, and he listened to every noise with an almost maddening anxiety, utterly despairing of his child's recovery, and yet eager to catch at any sound that might disabuse him of this terrible conviction. At times he gave way to the expression of a petulant and even contemptuous incredulity, execrating all those who would delude him with the notion that the dead might be brought to life; until, as his anger subsided, he would again listen, and the noise of a footfall, or of an opening or shutting door, would suddenly electrify him with a thrill of vague and baseless hope. This intensity of suspense at length becoming utterly intolerable, he was preparing to burst from the room, that he might relieve himself from so torturing an uncertainty, when the landlady entered, exclaiming with an animated

look, and in a hurried voice, that his daughter was recovering, for she had now began to breathe; but that he was forbidden for the present to return into the chamber, or to see her till she had regained a little more strength.

“What! what! what!” ejaculated the Captain: “Polly recovered! Polly breathing!” and too much agitated to heed the injunction he had received, he rushed past her, and burst into the parlour, where he had left his child. The shutters were now unclosed, and by the broad cheerful light of a sunshiny day, in itself producing an apparent change from death to life, he beheld his daughter, supported by pillows upon the table, and could distinctly perceive that her bosom was heaving, though with a catching and difficult respiration. Claspings his hands together with a loud smack, as he leaned over her, he passionately ejaculated her name, when she slowly opened her eyes, and faintly murmured the word—“Father!”

The sound of her voice, the sight of her opened eyes, but above all the tender gush of feeling awakened by the word “Father!” were

too much for him. His grief he had borne with a considerable share of stoicism, but this sudden tide of bliss utterly unmanned him. He sobbed two or three times with a gurgling noise in his throat, and then bursting into a loud peal of hysterical laughter, ran round the room, vehemently shaking hands with every one, in a transport of delight that rendered him totally unconscious of his actions. Having shared the previous silence and dejection of its master, the mastiff thought itself entitled to participate in his joy, and barked, and leaped in an ecstasy which was increased to a perfect delirium, when the Captain, giving him one hasty tap of recognition, exclaimed, "Poor fellow! poor fellow!" Again turning towards his daughter, the bewildered father was about to throw himself upon her body, for the purpose of embracing her, when the medical attendant succeeded in calming his transport by declaring, that he would not be answerable for his patient's life, if her returning senses were to be exposed to any new shocks of feeling. Instantly sobered by this statement, he hurried out of the chamber, fol-

lowed by his panting dog, and returned to the small back-parlour; where, shortly after, he had the inexpressible delight of receiving a message to inform him, that his daughter might now be pronounced out of any immediate danger, but that she must not for some time be either visited or disturbed in any way.

Once relieved from those paramount apprehensions upon Mary's account, which had absorbed every faculty of his mind, his thoughts instantly reverted to his unfortunate friend George; and bitterly accusing himself for having forgotten him, he was about to run down to the beach, where he had last seen him, when he was informed that the young gentleman, who had saved the life both of his daughter and of the wounded man, had already, with the assistance of others, conveyed him to an upper-room of the house, where he was at that moment under the hands of the surgeon, who had given strict orders that no one should be admitted while he was endeavouring to set the broken leg.

Only a brief period had elapsed, when Henry

himself entering the little back-parlour, congratulated the Captain with a cordial warmth upon the recovery of his daughter, which, he said, might now be considered certain; and at the same time informed him, that although his friend had fainted from the loss of blood, the fracture was of as favourable a nature as such a wound would allow, and that the bone had been already reset.

Such exhilarating tidings, conveyed to him by a person from whom he had just received such inappreciable benefits, quite overwhelmed the Captain. Seizing his benefactor's hand, he endeavoured to express his gratitude, but his voice failed him, and he could only affectionately grasp the hand; a second attempt only produced an increased nervous wringing of the imprisoned and almost benumbed hand; but at the third trial, the words and the tears blurted out together, as he ejaculated, in a hoarse, tremulous whisper—"Bless you, Sir! bless you! God Almighty bless you!"—and then turned aside to conceal his feelings which had now become perfectly uncontrollable.

“I am already overpaid by the success of my exertions for the little trouble they have occasioned me,” said Henry: “but I have still a favour to ask of you; will you lend me your beautiful black mare for two or three hours?”

“Take her—keep her;—take my heart’s blood, my life, if you will!” cried the Captain.

“You shall have your mare again in two hours, or in three at farthest,” said Henry, looking at his watch, and then hurrying out of the room.

It was fortunate for Mary, that when she had fainted away, on first recognizing George upon the crag, he had never relinquished his grasp of her hand, so that, although she was occasionally submerged by the waves, she had never remained long under water. Owing to this circumstance, her recovery had been effected with comparative ease; and she was enabled to be removed on the same evening to the Grange-farm, although in a very languid and exhausted

condition. George's feverish state, however, and the nature of his wound, would not allow him to be transferred for the present to any other place, and he accordingly remained at the small public-house to which he had first been carried.

CHAPTER III.

But changing thus their arms about,
Each soon becomes perplex'd and stupid,
Love puts the torch of Hymen out,
While Hymen blunts the shafts of Cupid.

'Twas this dissolv'd their union sweet,
And broke Affection's firmest tether ;
And now if Love and Hymen meet,
They seldom sojourn long together.

G. F. RICHARDSON.

“ A MOST extraordinary thing, Lady Susan,” said Mr. Frampton to his wife, as they sate in their splendid drawing-room, awaiting the arrival of a few friends and neighbours who had been invited to a small music-party : “ A most extraordinary thing that Arthur should have left Oakham-hall so suddenly, without telling me what urgent business could take him to

London at this season of the year, when it is hardly decent for a person of his rank in life to be seen there. It is a want of proper respect, for which there is no excuse."

"Had you been at home when he set off, you would probably have been apprised of his object; which, however, he did not communicate even to me, though he did find time to mention that he should invite young Lord Mossdale to return with him to the Hall, and to remain here for some time during the shooting-season. Indeed, I requested him to do this; for Mossdale, you know, has latterly paid some attentions to Augusta. He walked with her a good deal at the Marchioness's fête champêtre at Roehampton; I took care that he should sit next to her at Sir Nugent Clavering's dinner-party; and I was really vexed that we should leave town just as we had made his acquaintance, for he certainly seemed taken with her."

"Well, well, follow your own plans, Lady Susan, only take care not to lose the substance in snatching at the shadow. More than once we could have secured a rich commoner for

the girl, had you not driven them all away by your indiscreet declaration, that she should wed none but a title, which is not the way to get one, by-the-bye. In proof of this, I may inform you that Lord Fawley, at whom you made such a dead set last season, came over with his father yesterday to the Manor-house, and never called at Oakham-hall ; an instance of disrespect which, I must say, I think rather extraordinary."

" Lord Latchmore and Fawley at the Manor-house ! What can they be doing there, unless they went to borrow money of old Welbeck ? As to their not calling here, the reason is manifest.—Yesterday was Wednesday, when you suffer the Hall to be converted into a *show-place* ; and as the Earl would hardly wish to be confounded with the Crumps, and Spriggses, and Jobsons, and Dobsons, who, on that unfortunate day, come over in all sorts of vehicles, from all sorts of places, to contaminate the Hall with their odious presence, I think his Lordship was quite right to stay away. I wish you would abolish this nuisance, which, for one day in every seven, not only dispossesses us of our own dwell-

ling, but prevents any of our acquaintance from coming near us."

Mr. Frampton, whose pride was gratified by the display of his gorgeous mansion, vindicated its exhibition, and denied the imputed annoyance. The lady insisted, throwing in a supercilious sneer at her husband's vain-glorious disposition; the latter retorted, enforcing his arguments by a provoking allusion to the poverty of his wife's family; and her Ladyship had been so studiously cool in the beginning of the discussion, that she would probably have ended by becoming warm, but that the door was most opportunely thrown open, and a servant announced—"Doctor and Miss Dotterel." Although Lady Susan's lowering countenance became instantly radiant, with smiles, while her voice assumed its blandest tones, as she welcomed her visitants, she could not refrain, after the first ceremonies of reception, from returning to the charge through the medium of her visitants. Another recent subject of matrimonial difference, had been her insisting upon the dismissal of Pompey, on account of his misbehaviour

when tipsy, a demand with which her husband having sturdily refused to comply, she now sought for an advocate by appealing to the Doctor, whether it was not monstrous to forgive the Negro so easily for such abominable conduct as that which he had himself witnessed.

“Why, as to that matter, Lady Susan,” said the Doctor, “we are enjoined forgiveness, and all that, by our most holy religion; that is to say, under certain—ahem!—and so forth, of all which your Ladyship is already aware: but really, when such an abominable offence as drunkenness—hem!—is aggravated by impertinence, why then, Mr. Frampton, you must yourself allow that such heinous conduct—in short, that Pompey’s behaviour when he was drunk,—for drunkenness, as you doubtless recollect, was the crime for which the two sons of Aaron—I forget their names just now, but I’ll look them out and tell you next time we meet—were punished with fire—ahem!—I say, Sir, all this proves that the Negro’s conduct amounts to a crying sin; yes, Sir, to a crying sin!”

Pompey, whose office it was to air and iron

the newspaper on its arrival by the coach and bring it to his master, having entered the room for this purpose unperceived by the Doctor, had heard his own condemnation, and deeming it unjust in one most essential particular, he exclaimed somewhat indignantly, as he shook his finger at his reverend arraigner, "No, massa Docker Dottel! no crying sin, but laughing sin, what mush better ting. Gog! Pompey nebber laugh so mush in um's life. Bery sorry, Missee Dottel, um chuck oo under da shin; I ax pardon, but nigger no sabby what um do, or else um nebber come near oo!"

"Hold your tongue, sirrah!" cried his master, "and lace this gouty shoe for me: nobody does it half so tenderly, except Fanny, that I must say. You'll excuse him, Miss Doterel; in his ignorance of our language, and still greater unacquaintance with manners, the poor fellow hardly knows what he says.—Now, Pompey, gently with it off the cushion—softly,—soh! that's capitally done!"

"Bery sorry, Docker Dottel," resumed Pompey, as he performed his office upon the gouty

foot with a delicacy and softness of touch that would have done honour to the most experienced practitioner—"Bery sorry—ax pardon—um nebber do so no more ; but um nebber was drunk afore in England, 'septin dis once, and dat 's more nor oo can say for ooseff, Docker ; so dere 's a hickory-nut for oo to crack !"

"Fellow ! fellow ! talk not to me in this manner. Your behaviour is really, quite—ahem !—in short, perfectly—and this you must yourself confess, Mr. Frampton."

With all his habitual pomposity and exaction of respect from others, the party thus appealed to tolerated almost every licence in his faithful Negro, and he therefore contented himself with saying, "Pompey, hold your tongue, I say ; lace the shoe as quickly as you can, and leave the room."

"Iss, Massa, iss ; no more speak nodder word to oo : but look oo here, Docker, listen a me, Massa Docker. 'Pose oo dry, like Cassada ; 'pose oo lub rum-punsh bery bad ; 'pose oo see great big bowl rum-punsh, bootiful good, bery lily warra, strong as da debble, won't oo

tote him op, and drinkee, drinkee, till da debble get into oo head, and den praps oo chock Missee under da shin, all da same I do maseff?"

"Ah, Pompey!" replied the good-natured Doctor, conciliated by his throwing all the blame upon his great spiritual adversary, "you are quite right: it was indeed the devil that got into your head; but I flatter myself, that this—hem!—this matter would never have happened, had you heard my sermon upon drunkenness, which is divided into three heads: first—"

"Gog! Massa Docker!" interposed the Black; "da drunkenness only divide na two—my head an' Tony's head: but had oo been at da George wid us, so mush oo lub da rum-punsh, dat oo 'd made da tree, and jomp, and dance, and sing 'Hi! ho! tink-a-tink-ting!' all da same like Tony and maseff."

Having completed the lacing of the shoe, Pompey had started up, suiting the action to the word, as was his invariable practice, by capering and snapping his fingers; a demonstration at which Miss Dotterel, in the apprehen-

sion perhaps of a new salute, drew back with looks of considerable horror. Frampton ordered his servant to quit the room, and Pompey immediately obeyed, his face mantled over with a radiant smile, as he held up his finger to the Doctor, and exclaimed, "Aha! Massa Docker Dattel! nebber shake oo head—oo know oo lub rum-punsh ooself bery mush. Found oo out, found oo out! Gog! dere's anoder hickory-nut for oo to crack!"

"Poor ignorant creature!" said the Doctor, "he little thinks that I have a particular dislike to rum-punch, and, indeed, abhor drunkenness of any sort—ahem!—and I therefore hold it very fortunate, in fact, singularly—that I can drink my two bottles of Madeira without being in the smallest degree affected. By-the-bye, Mr. Frampton, when do you expect the pipe of East-India which you promised to let me have?" This inquiry brought on a most erudite and elaborate discussion, touching "London particular" and other Madeira wines, whence they diverged to the congenial subject of lively green turtle, whereof Mr. Frampton

had just received a supply from the West-Indies, and expressed in most pathetic terms his apprehensions that the attack of gout under which he was then suffering would hardly allow him to do full justice to his favourite calipash and calipee. As they had both imaginative palates, they proceeded by an easy episode to the New Forest venison, disserting with considerable taste and unction upon the merits of the bucks and does produced in the respective walks, but assigning the pre-eminence to Boldre-wood Walk for winter venison, on account of the great quantity of beech mast that served to fatten the deer ; while they regretted, with much feeling, the difficulty of getting a King's warrant for a doe killed in this favourite district. As he gently rubbed his swollen foot, the legacy bequeathed to him by former intemperance, Mr. Frampton took occasion to observe, that if the fair were allowed, there would doubtless be a number of eating and drinking booths, to the scandalous promotion of gluttony among the lower orders ; a vice to which they were already far too much

addicted, and which could not be too severely reprobated, when practised by such people. In these sentiments the Doctor having perfectly coincided, proceeded to give a half hour's description of a long contested rubber at whist, which had kept him up till past one o'clock in the morning, and then reverting to the fair, declared that it was not the gluttony and drunkenness he objected to, though that was bad enough, so much as the gambling, and the scandalous waste of time that it occasioned; adding, that it had more than once occurred to him, that idleness was the root of all evil, and indeed, he had been since told that some other sensible man had made the same observation.

Meanwhile, Miss Dotterel, recovering from the shock occasioned by Pompey's sudden *capriccio*, had again rustled and composed her old-fashioned silk gown, had with the respective finger and thumb of each hand taken two pinches of petticoat to draw it over her thick ankles, half-rising from her seat to facilitate the operation, had cleared her throat by a hem! had

imparted to her features as much distress as their vacant good-humoured pinguitude would allow, and thus proceeded to disburthen herself of her own griefs, and to inquire into those of her neighbour.

“ Well, Lady Susan, I have been truly anxious to see you, that I might know all about it. I have been pitying you beforehand. I dare say you will have dreadful tidings to tell me; but I *must* inquire how you escaped from that terrible visitation last night?”

“ I am really not aware to what terrible visitation you allude,” replied her Ladyship, gazing unconcernedly at the reflection of her own feathered head in one of the long mirrors.

“ La, how very odd ! I mean the storm in the night—such wind and rain ! of all the storms I ever !——didn’t you hear it ?—haven’t you suffered ?—no damage done ?”

“ I have never inquired. I found the Hall when I got up this morning precisely where I left it last night, and being satisfied upon this point, I have felt no concern beyond it.”

“ La, how very odd ! Have you never asked

about the garden? I was down in ours the moment the rain held up. Such havoc! such devastation! quite heart-breaking! You know our crooked apple-tree—not the espalier, but the standard, down by the bee-hives—well, one of the largest boughs, covered with apples, was broken off. Three dozen jerganel pears I myself picked off the ground, none of them ripe, and what we are to make of them, heaven only knows! unless I pick out a dozen of the best, and send them down to Mrs. Penguin, which I think I shall do, for she sent me a large pot of preserved-ginger in return for the wind-fall apricots last week. As to the seventeen quinces that I put into my basket, I don't care so much about them, for I had them boiled directly for marmalade. By-the-bye, Lady Susan, I determined to speak to you about one thing which I have long had upon my mind—*very* long: you can't have done your marmalade yet? now *don't* make it so sweet as you did last year. *Indeed*, there was too much sugar in the last, and you *must* allow me to tell you of it, for I *can* have no interest in the affair, except as your friend.

But the worst of all, Lady Susan, was our Bury pears. Eleven of the largest blown down from the favourite tree,—that one by the cucumber-frames, you know—and all smashed to pieces, and the poor Doctor so particularly fond of them, that I'm sure I don't wonder he has been out of humour the whole day. It *was* trying, you must allow, even to poor brother, who is such a sweet-tempered man; and nobody, after all, likes to have their patience *too* severely tried."

"I can answer for myself upon that point," said Lady Susan, raising her eye-glass, and looking anxiously towards the door, in the hope that some other of the expected guests might enter to relieve her from the penance she was enduring.

"And then only to think, my dear Lady Susan, of what happened in the very middle of the night,—and such an awful night too!" The spinster drew her chair nearer to her Ladyship, looked still more demure than usual, and dropping her voice into a confidential whisper suited to the importance and solemnity of the communication, thus proceeded:—"About half-

past one, or a little before two—I'm not quite sure which—just at the time that I really thought the great stack of chimneys would come down, and bury us all in the ruins of the Vicarage, what *do* you think happened in the housekeeper's room?—You'll never guess—a most extraordinary coincidence to be sure; I see you are anxious to know, so I won't keep you any longer in suspense, why,—Tabitha, my beauty of a cat, kittened! Only to think, my dear Lady Susan, four pretty little tortoise-shell lady kittens, and one brindled Tom—I shall have *him* drowned, certainly; I can't *bear* tom cats, can you? By-the-bye, Lady Susan, whom do you generally employ to drown your kittens? It is an unpleasant office after all, now *isn't* it? And I don't wonder that our cook objects to it, for she is a married woman, and has had children of her own; and for my part, we never have a couple of kittens drowned, but it sets me thinking about the poor, dear little Princes that were smothered in the Tower. You have heard that story, I dare say, Lady Susan?"

This Tabithean chit-chat proving too much

for her Ladyship's patience, she rose, exclaiming, "What can have become of Augusta and Fanny?" and ringing the bell, she desired that their maid might be sent to summon them to the drawing-room, an order, however, which was rendered unnecessary by the appearance of the young ladies. Miss Frampton had been put out of humour by some little bantering allusions of her sister, but her company face, however, and as far as possible her company temper having been both assumed at the door, she entered the room with her usual smile, and the regulation curtesy to the visitants, placing herself for the present with her back to the light, lest any traces of her recent flush might still be perceptible, but carefully displaying her much admired foot and ankle, which, as she well knew, would betray no symptoms of her ungracious mood.

Other visitants presently arrived, refreshments were distributed, the news of the immediate neighbourhood, always the predominant object of interest in a country circle, was discussed with an eagerness scarcely warranted by

its insignificance, and Lady Susan having prevailed upon two or three indifferent players to take the lead, subsequently put in requisition the musical powers of her own daughters. As Miss Frampton had taken lessons both upon the harp and piano from the most eminent and expensive masters, her father, whenever he meant to express that she was a first-rate player, always contented himself with stating that he had paid the very highest price for her tuition, cost being in his opinion an invariable test of excellence. From its better favouring the display of her handsome arm and pretty foot, the harp had been selected as her favourite instrument, and so far as mere execution extended it could not be denied that she was an adept; but both her playing and singing were always exactly the same; each presented a precise echo of the lessons she had received. Unendowed with taste or feeling of her own, she followed the master by line and rule, and the result was, that her stiff, regular, mechanical performance resembled that of an automaton, often exciting wonder, but seldom conveying much pleasure. Fanny's

ill health and inferior importance in the mother's estimation, had prevented her having the same advantages as her sister, but her voice was much sweeter; it had been just sufficiently cultivated to give a graceful developement to its natural powers, while her innate taste and sensibility enabled her so literally to "snatch a grace beyond the reach of art," as even to justify the triteness of the quotation. Augusta's performances and singing only reached the ear; Fanny's were not content with this, they found their way to the heart.

The former was tuning her harp, the latter was running over the keys of the piano-forte, preparatory to their playing a duet together, when the worthy Doctor, whose ideas, never very progressive, had come to a stand-still about half a century before, called out to them, "I protest, young ladies, I am glad to see you both so well employed; it is quite—ahem!—in fact, absolutely—it is, indeed, Lady Susan, quite a treat to me. I was always fond of music, and I remember, when I was a young man, I could play a tune upon the flute—perhaps you have

got it, young ladies,—it was the minuet in Ariadne, an opera, I think, of Tom Durfey's, and the music was by—hem!—yes, I'm pretty sure it was by him."

"La! brother, how very odd! what a memory you have got!" cried Miss Dotterel. "Ah! those were the days for music; we have had neither singers nor composers since. Do you remember how you used to listen when I sang, 'Water parted from the sea.'"

"The identical two 'genteelest of all tunes' to which the bear in Goldsmith's comedy used to dance," whispered Fanny to her sister; "I would give the world if we had the music, for the three first bars would as infallibly set the Doctor dancing, and his sister warbling, as if they heard the magic strains of Orpheus."

"Ah, brother!" sighed Miss Dotterel, with a shake of the head, "do you remember poor, dear Major Ogilvie, when first we came to the Vicarage, how beautifully he sung that fine bravura of Farinelli? I forget the name of it. But, ah! I shall never forget the sweet little French spaniel the Major gave me, and the re-

ceipt for the Spanish olio that you were so fond of. Heigho! the Major is dead and gone, and so is poor little Fauchette: but methinks I can hear her barking—it *was* a sweet bark—at this very moment.”

“Well, well, Dorothy,” cried the Doctor, who was intolerant of any twaddling but his own, “you can hear Fauchette bark at some other time, when it will not prevent our listening to the music of these young ladies.”

“La! brother, you’re *so* droll!” said the spinster, and so saying, she gazed at the Doctor with an affectionate smile, and held her peace.

Augusta and her sister now began to perform together, when the former, either from her not having yet recovered the ruffling of her temper, or from an overweening confidence in her own powers, boggled, and was obliged to come to a stop. They recommenced; she again blundered at the same difficult passage, and rising from her harp, exclaimed pettishly, that it was impossible to play with Fanny, who kept no time, and had not sufficiently practised the piece to get through it decently. This was an

old *ruse* of the elder sister, who, whenever she was at fault in a duet, invariably threw the blame upon Fanny, relying upon her good-nature, or her nonchalance, which, upon these occasions, always led her to submit quietly to reproof, however unmerited. Fanny, indeed, considered her sister to be such a superior musician, that she really imagined herself to be in error, and had therefore only to confess, that she was a sadly inattentive girl, and to admit the truth of her mother's customary ejaculation, "I shall never be able to make any thing of poor Fanny!" Solos and singing succeeded, in which several of the female visitants took a part, without any farther failure during the whole course of the evening, and to the loudly expressed satisfaction of all parties.

There is probably no country in the world wherein music is so extravagantly encouraged, so widely diffused, so vehemently praised, and so little loved or felt, as in England; so that it would be almost as difficult to find a gentleman who confesses that he dislikes it, as one who speaks the real truth when he declares that he

is fond of it. Almost every private party, where the individuals are freed from the restraint of a public concert, will corroborate this averment, and prove that, to the great majority of the company, there is no music half so delightful as the sound of their own voices. The male visitants beseech, they appeal, they are tender, they are even pathetic, in imploring some one to begin; and in proof of their sincerity, they are minutely circumstantial, mentioning the identical song or overture on which they dote, and which they will officiously ferret out from a huge pile of books. The lady thus passionately beleaguered, probably an expectant spinster, is all smiles and acquiescence. She begins; the first sound of her voice or instrument, like the first beat of the drum that disenchanted the ship of Aboulfouaris from the loadstone rock, sends the crew of her petitioners to a distance, they form little knots and parties, they talk aloud of hounds, horses, guns, politics, anything; the ladies dissert upon balls and fashions; the card-players are vociferous about honours and odd tricks: but when the unfortunate vo-

calist has finished her song, the whole disposable forces of the room rush once more to the instrument, in utter ecstasies, ejaculating beautiful ! charming ! delightful ! exquisite ! sweet voice ! most accomplished singer ! Whose are the words ? whose the music ? where can I buy it ? Some enraptured beau, more hypocritically affected than the others, exclaims in his softest and most winning voice, “ *Would* you do us the favour to sing it over again ? ” The accommodating warbler obliges them with an encore, which the whole auditory remunerate with a still louder obligato accompaniment of hounds, horses, guns, politics, balls, fashions, honours, and odd tricks, until the termination of the vocal strain calls upon them for a new round of applausive exclamations, which now become almost riotously enthusiastic. Thus generally passes the evening where music forms the nominal entertainment at private-houses ; and thus was it whiled away at Oakham-hall, the visitants unanimously declaring to the host and hostess, that they had had a perfect treat, complimenting the young lady performers upon the

perfection with which they had executed the most difficult pieces, and nine-tenths of the party sincerely wishing that the aforesaid pieces, instead of being only difficult, had been altogether impossible.

CHAPTER IV.

‘The best of us differ from others in fewer particulars than we agree with them in.

ROUSSEAU.

“ OUGHT we not, Lady Susan, to visit our neighbour Ringwood?” said Mr. Frampton. “ We have not been over to Brook-hatch since we came to the Hall, and though, from the embarrassed circumstances in which his father left him, Frank can no longer give such entertainments as we have been accustomed to receive, I don’t think we ought altogether to cut his acquaintance. Not that we need be so intimate as formerly, but I hate unnecessary rudeness, or any appearance of worldliness; and besides, I want to show him our new conservatory, and the marble staircase from the hall, and the alteration in the stables.”

“Why really, he lives at present in so very different a style from ourselves,” replied her Ladyship, “that one can hardly keep up the acquaintance, or I should have invited him to our party last night. If we are to visit pennyless people, simply because they are neighbours, we may as well leave our cards at the work-house at once.”

“But we were only lately so very intimate with his father.”

“Ay, and if old Ringwood were still alive, lived in as handsome style, and gave as genteel entertainments as formerly, we might still continue so; but we must positively draw a line somewhere, and poor Frank, I am told, is not only without a carriage of any sort, but actually scruples not to have the door opened to visitors by a maid.”

“Poor fellow! I was not aware that he had sunk so low as that: but still, Lady Susan, as I really wish to show him the conservatory, I think it would be but kind and neighbourly to give him a call.”

“Well, I should not wish to have it said

that we had entirely dropped his acquaintance, after having been so much at the Hatch in his father's time; and therefore, as I intended driving that way this morning, I can have no insuperable objection to paying him a visit."

"I must confess, that I do not see what we are to get by keeping Mr. Ringwood on our visiting list," observed Augusta.

"What do we *want* to get?" inquired Fanny. "We have already every thing that we can desire; it is rather a question, therefore, of what we can confer: and if we can gratify Mr. Ringwood by calling upon him, I hope mamma will make a point of doing so."

"These are matters, Fanny, of which you know nothing; and how often must I desire you not to call me mamma, which sounds exactly like a great school-girl."

"Always call your mother 'Lady Susan,'" said Mr. Frampton: "you never hear me address her without naming her title, and it is a mark of respect which a daughter should still less omit."

"I would not fail in my respect, but the

word 'mamma' seems a mark of love, and that comes so much more naturally to my mouth, that I cannot help sometimes forgetting the other."

"That is because you have no tact, no discretion," said Lady Susan; "because you follow impulses instead of considering appearances and proprieties, than which I know not a more unfortunate evidence of vulgarity. My poor child! when shall I be able to make any thing of you!"

"Never, I fear; if to become any thing I must first consider my feelings as nothing. When they run away with me, whether I will or no, how can I find time to cogitate, and calculate, and conform to all the cold regulations of etiquette? But you *are* going to Brook-hatch, I hope," she continued, awkwardly dropping in the words "Lady Susan" at the conclusion of her speech.

"That is my present intention, certainly."

"Oh, I am so glad!" exclaimed Fanny, clapping her hands together, while her face was lighted up with animation.

“ It is useless speaking to her,” said her mother, in a desponding tone ; “ there is no tutoring her, she does not understand our meaning. That vulgar clasp of the hands, and the accompanying exclamation, were only worthy of a little child who has been told she shall go to the fair.”

“ Well, I am as glad as any little child going to a fair, for I do like Mr. Ringwood excessively.”

“ Fanny ! what *are* you saying ? You talk in this way on purpose to vex me. Surely you must be aware that it is perfectly indelicate for a single young woman to say she likes any gentleman excessively, more especially when speaking of one who is not in a situation to marry.”

“ If he were, then,” said Fanny, “ it would *not* be indelicate ? What a comical distinction ! But why cannot Mr. Ringwood marry ?”

“ Because he is so poor that he would only entail misery upon any woman who should be mad enough to unite herself with him.”

“ I cannot understand why such a prodigious

fuss should be made about riches; I seem to hear of nothing else. Is every woman then, Lady Susan, who marries a rich man, quite—quite—quite sure of being happy?” As she spoke, she laid a progressive emphasis upon the word *quite*, accompanying it with such an arch expression, that her mother, imagining an ironical innuendo to be levelled against herself, felt half disposed to be angry, and still more so when her own sensations told her that it was an awkward and embarrassing question. Nor was this rising irritation in the smallest degree appeased, when Mr. Frampton bluntly remarked—“If such a woman is not happy it must be her own fault. What can she want more if she’s rich?”

Determined not to lower her dignity by any betrayal of discomposure, Lady Susan assumed a tone of particular suavity as she said, speaking to her daughter, first glancing her eyes towards her husband—“It must be confessed, Fanny, that there are some things which wealth cannot purchase; such, for instance, as polished manners, cultivated understanding, amiability,

youth, health, and so forth: but the woman who marries a rich man has many chances in her favour, many substitutes for disappointment, and if, after all, she should be ever so uncomfortable, she has at least the consolation of knowing that the world thinks her singularly fortunate."

"And that is every thing in my opinion," observed Augusta; "for it must be a happiness to any woman to feel that she is an object of general envy."

"Such a conviction would make me quite melancholy," said Fanny; "for I don't know any difference between envy and hatred, to say nothing of malice and all uncharitableness. But let me suppose a case, just for the sake of argument. Suppose that Mr. Ringwood, or any other, possessing nothing beyond a mere competency, were to imagine that he could perfectly well dispense with horses, and carriages, and servants, and every thing that constitutes a handsome establishment; and suppose that he should find a wife of exactly the same opinion, why should they not live together in the

way of their own choice, and be as happy as congenial tastes and opinions can make them?"

"Because the genteel world would look down upon them, and refuse to visit them, and universally pronounce them to be miserable."

"Lud! how shocking! but I shouldn't pity them a bit for all that! Now don't be angry, Lady Susan; I know I'm a mere simpleton, and I dare say you tell me the truth, when you declare I shall never be any wiser; but positively, if I were so circumstanced, I should in return look down with supreme indifference upon the genteel world, since I would a thousand times rather be happy, and be thought ever so wretched, than render myself miserable, for the still more miserable consolation of being thought happy. It is very true that we may cheat others, but we cannot cheat ourselves; and if I am contented and cheerful within the little world of my own bosom, why should I trouble my head about the great world without?"

"It is no use reasoning with you, Fanny, you talk quite like a child. When you get

older, perhaps you may become less of a simpleton. Go and put on your things ; I don't want any more of your silly argument and discussion, for it vexes me to listen to such perilous nonsense."

" You should never be vexed with me," said Fanny, " because I never mean to give offence ; but I can neither help being what I am, nor speaking what I feel."

" The last misfortune might, at all events, be prevented, if you would sometimes bear in mind the profound remark of the Frenchman, that speech was given to us in order that we might conceal our thoughts."

" Alack, poor me !" exclaimed Fanny, with a look of ludicrous distress ; " then I may as well be dumb, for I have no thoughts that I wish to conceal ;" and putting her fore-finger to her lips, she stalked, with a mock solemnity, out of the room.

" Is that child a real simpleton, or a cunning little baggage, who knows more than she pretends ?" inquired Mr. Frampton. " This is the last house in which I expected to hear such

dangerous notions, and I cannot imagine where she picked them up, unless out of some play-book."

"Nor can I," added her Ladyship: "it is a species of vulgar sentimentality which I particularly abominate. Augusta, my dear, you had better get ready, the carriage will be at the door shortly. Mr. Frampton," continued the apprehensive mother, when they found themselves alone, "we must take care of Fanny; there is sometimes a great deal of mischief in these half-witted, odd, fanciful girls; and though we have been accustomed to treat her like a child, I am often tempted to suspect, that she not only actually ventures to think for herself, in the most alarming manner, but that, if the occasion offered, she has obstinacy and stubbornness enough to make her act for herself; and set up her own opinion in opposition to that of all her friends."

"Ay, ay, Lady Susan! has she so? that's a bad symptom, very bad indeed. I hate opposition in or out of Parliament."

"Truly it is a most anxious consideration,"

exclaimed her Ladyship, affecting a maternal solicitude which was foreign to her nature. "I'm sure, I don't know who would be a parent!"

"So it is, indeed, Lady Susan, a very anxious reflection—very—quite distressing; but what have we here?" said Mr. Frampton, opening a letter which had just been delivered to him by Pompey. "Aha! this is good news indeed—capital! capital! The Mermaid, Captain Hacklestone, has arrived in the River with the turtles I expected, all of which have been landed in lively, good condition, and one has been sent off to us by the van of last night. Aha! I must see about my party—I must engage the Doctor, he understands turtle. Ringwood may as well come too. Poor fellow! he doesn't often get a turtle feast now; it will be quite a charity, and he can then see the conservatory. Where are my crutches?—is the carriage come? Zooks! Lady Susan, how unconcerned you appear! This good news has made me quite young again, and I could almost—curse the gout! what a twinge was there! Perhaps we shall have the new batch of East India Ma-

deira in time ; I long to taste it." So saying, he hobbled down-stairs to the carriage, his gouty foot, by its misgiving twinges, seeming to anticipate the accession of disease which was preparing for it from over-indulgence in the expected luxuries.

Frank Ringwood's father, a jovial and hospitable, but most improvident country squire, had kept hounds and horses, given dinners and entertainments, and maintained a large establishment, in a style of expense quite incommensurate with his means, so that, although he could not alienate the small patrimonial estate, which was fortunately entailed, he had gradually wasted the rest of the property bequeathed to him by his predecessor, and was besides heavily encumbered with debt at the time of his death. From a high principle of honour, as well as from respect to his father's memory, Frank had voluntarily rendered himself responsible for these debts, which he was yearly liquidating by a rigorous system of economy, and by that reduction of his establishment, which had elicited the compassionate contempt of Lady Susan and

Mr. Frampton. Hounds, hunters, gamekeepers, and supernumerary idlers of all sorts had been dismissed ; but a few faithful old domestics had been retained ; while such of the horses and dogs as had become aged in his father's service, instead of being sold, were allowed to range at liberty in the enclosed demesne that surrounded the house ; so that there was some truth, though but little charity, in Lady Susan's sneering remark, that the place resembled an infirmary for superannuated bipeds and quadrupeds.

Brook-hatch was so termed from a streamlet at a little distance, which, after turning a mill, in its subsequent course to the sea took the name of the Miller's-run, being the identical water in which Penguin, the geologist, had received a ducking. The house never having been altered from the time when country squires were only a better sort of farmers, made not the smallest pretensions to elegance. After entering the low porch, over which was the apple-loft, you passed by a succession of store-closets, a range of pear-bins, and along a narrow passage, before you reached the parlour, a spacious though low

room, the walls of which were adorned with portraits, wherein the animal decidedly predominated in number over the human likenesses; for while there were but three squires, and one squiress, there were half a dozen greyhounds that had gained as many cups in coursing, a brace of spaniels as large as life, a famous hunter, an old white pony, a favourite brood-mare, a pointer making a dead set at a partridge almost as big as himself, and a half obliterated, grim-looking, black terrier, who in the olden times had been the terror of rats and badgers.

Frank Ringwood, attached from long habit to field-sports, still followed the hounds, although it was no longer the " Brook-hatch " pack, but a subscription one, and he rode a useful hackney, instead of a thorough-bred hunter; his greyhounds, too, had lost no portion of their coursing celebrity, and he retained unimpaired his own personal fame as a sure shot, and a keen sportsman. These amusements, however, were accessaries, not principals; for he had a good collection of books, which he was fond of reading; he found, moreover, much occasional

occupation in all sorts of friendly offices among his neighbours; and limited as were his present means, he contrived to be hospitable in his own plain unpretending way, candidly forewarning his guests, that if they came for the sake of cheerful society, and good but homely fare, they would be welcome; but that if they expected expensive wines, or a luxurious feast, they had better stay away. Perfectly liberal and independent in his modes of thinking, he detested all distinctions of sect or party; making it one of his favourite experiments, to invite to the same dinner-table people of the most opposite opinions, upon the principle that, as they would probably agree together in twenty points for one upon which they differed, he might, by dwelling upon the former, and avoiding the latter, promote a much better understanding between the parties. These philanthropic little plots generally succeeded: and if we were all of us to imitate his example; to seek, instead of shunning, a personal knowledge of our opponents; to consider upon how many questions we agree with, and upon how few we dissent from

them; how much there may be to love in their private character, to counterbalance the single point that we dislike in their public conduct, much of the party spirit that embitters life would unquestionably be removed; and if we could not accord in unanimous brotherhood together, which it would be Utopian to expect, we might at least learn to differ, not only without acrimony and rancour, but even with a feeling of perfect charity towards our adversaries.

"I remember," said Mr. Frampton, as they approached the house, "when the original Hatch stood here, from which the place takes its name. Old Ringwood built this lodge, but you see it is shut up, and Frank has been obliged to dismiss the keeper, and leave the servants of his visitants to get down and open the gate. Poor fellow!"

"Poor fellow!" was echoed by Lady Susan and Augusta in the same tone of contemptuous pity.

"The gate, however, swings back upon its hinges just as it used to do," said Fanny; "and notwithstanding this terrible calamity, we

have without difficulty made our way into the park."

"Park!" ejaculated Augusta—"stocked with sheep and black cattle instead of deer!" and she repeated the "poor fellow!" in a still more condoling tone; while Lady Susan sarcastically exclaimed, "Poor *Farmer Ringwood*!"

As they passed the silent, untenanted dog-kennel,—sad evidence that the Brook-hatch pack of hounds was no longer in existence, these exclamations were renewed; for none of the party, excepting Fanny, omitted a single opportunity of pointing out any alteration that attested the reduced circumstances of the present proprietor.—"*This*, at least, is a manifest improvement," cried Fanny. "Last time I came to the Hatch, I recollect being frightened by the howling of those horrid dogs; while there was an odour from a nasty pile of bones and carrion outside the kennel that was by no means aromatic. It is quite delightful to see the same place so tidy, and quiet, and wholesome."

Lady Susan threw up her eyes in silent scorn of her daughter's silliness, and they proceeded towards the house, uttering such fresh ejaculations of pity at every new discovery of reduction in the establishment, that it might have been supposed the object of their compassion, instead of getting rid of an encumbrance, had lost so many limbs from his proper body. At length they reached the porch and rang the bell, which produced no other reply than the distant barking of half-a-dozen dogs, whose variety of cadence seemed to attest a correspondent diversity of age and breed. A second peal produced a louder response of the same nature ; some time after which, the door was opened by the cook, a very cleanly and respectable-looking woman, but whose arms, whitened with flour up to the elbows, showed that the visitants had surprised her in the very catastrophe of either pies or puddings. With many curtsies she informed them that old William was helping his master in the garden, and that Sarah, having just stepped down to a poor sick woman in the village with some milk and broken victuals, she

herself had been obliged to answer the door “in such a sad pickle;” and having added, with another curtsey, that if they would be so good as to walk through the house, they would find her master in the garden, she made a hasty retreat to the kitchen.

“This is really more degrading than I had anticipated,” said Lady Susan, shrugging her shoulders, “and forms certainly a new sort of reception for people moving in our sphere; for even in the vulgarity of the Penguins there is a certain air of spruceness, and a decent livery-servant in the hall. Recollect, Mr. Frampton, that I came here to oblige you; and having ventured thus far into Brook-hatch poorhouse, I think we had better leave our cards on the porch-bench, and make our retreat without loss of time.”

“Certainly, certainly,” cried Augusta, gazing round her with a distasteful look; “for we may just as well visit the butcher and baker; and besides, we shall never find our way into the garden through this crinkum-crankum, old-fashioned farm-house.”

“Oh! never fear! never fear! I will be your pilot—follow me—follow me!” exclaimed Fanny; and hurrying forward, she was out of sight in a moment. Missing the proper turning, however, she made her way to the parlour we have described, whence she bounded upstairs, ran along a passage, terminated by the apple-room over the porch, scudded back again, and burst out laughing, on finding that her bewildered friends had never stirred from the spot where she had left them. In a few words she recounted her adventures, declaring that the apple-room was half full of her favourite delicious crumpings, of which she had stolen one, and after she had finished eating it, would make a point of asking Mr. Ringwood’s permission for taking it. “And now,” she added, “I must be off on a fresh voyage of discovery, which I hope will be more successful than the last.”

With these words she disappeared, Lady Susan exclaiming at the same moment, “That madcap girl is absolutely intoxicated with high spirits, which betray her into every species of

vulgarity. We shall never make any thing of her—never!”

“It is indeed a most melancholy exhibition of boisterous hoidening,” added Augusta, who never upon any occasion relaxed the stiffness of her own regulated deportment.

The stately mother and the formal daughter were both wrong. There was neither vulgarity nor hoidening in the demeanour of Fanny, who in the midst of a sportive cheerfulness that was occasionally exuberant, almost to childishness, contrived to preserve an undeviating gracefulness and natural gentility. In another minute she rejoined them, her face glowing from the rapidity of her movements, as she exclaimed, “Did I not tell you I would be your guide? Follow me, follow me, for I have threaded the maze, I have discovered a clue to the labyrinth.” Obeying this injunction, the party soon found themselves in the back-yard, communicating with the garden.—“Did you ever see any thing so complete and comfortable?” inquired Fanny, running about from one place to another. “Look! here is the cheese-room, and the

brewhouse, and the laundry, and the larder, and the dairy, as neat and delicate as a fairy palace. Nay, Augusta, you need not hold up your petticoats so high, for I'm sure every thing is as clean as a silver penny, both inside the house and outside. Lady Susan, shall I tell you the difference between Oakham-hall and Brook-hatch? In the former, every thing seems to be made for show, and to be too fine for use; while here, every thing appears to be intended for use and comfort, without any reference to display. Really the zig-zag passages, and little three-cornered rooms, and plain furniture of this nice, comical, old-fashioned place, are quite a treat, after the large, square, cold, gorgeous, solemn saloons of Oakham."

"If these absurdities proceed from sheer ignorance," said Lady Susan, "they only deserve compassion; but if you speak thus out of waywardness, and on purpose to vex us, it is a liberty in which I desire you will not again indulge."

"The poor girl must mean it as a joke," said Mr. Frampton, "and a very bad one it

is, for not even a child, that had her sober senses, would dream of comparing a mere farm-house like this to Oakham."

"I know that comparisons are odious," replied Fanny, "and therefore I never thought of making one. I only said that I preferred the Hatch to the Hall."

"A mere simpleton!" exclaimed Lady Susan with a look of contemptuous pity: "she does not even understand the meaning of words."

By this time they had reached the middle of the garden, where they found Ringwood, with his coat off, and a spade in his hand, digging holes in the ground for some pots of beautiful auriculas which his servant was bringing him. His face exhibited that uniform vermillion glow, which not only evinces health, but carries with it a certain air of gentility; while his fine figure was seen to full advantage as he struck his spade into the earth, and drew himself up to examine his approaching visitants, not at first distinguishing who they were. Although there was very little in the character of Lady Susan, her husband, or her eldest daughter,

with which he could sympathise, Ringwood was naturally warm-hearted, and feeling really gratified by a visit from Mr. Frampton in his present decrepit state, he hastened towards him, shook him long and heartily by the hand, and welcomed him with beaming looks and friendly tones, that left no doubt of their perfect sincerity. After having accosted the ladies with a frank but polite cordiality, and expressed his regret that his visitant was not yet able to discard his crutches, he placed a garden-chair for Mr. Frampton, and said, as he pointed to his spade, "You find me, neighbour, as the Senators did Diocletian at Salona; and though, I dare say, you don't come to offer me a crown, I think I may venture to assert, that I would not accept one, if it compelled me to give up my garden, which has become the favourite hobby of the very few that I can now afford. My fellow-labourer, William, whom you may recollect in a different capacity at the Hatch, but who is now good enough to be my factotum, was assisting me to plunge some auricula pots in the ground; and finer flowers, I think I

may venture to say, you cannot produce even at Oakham-Hall."

"I beg leave, Sir, to doubt that," said Mr. Frampton, with a look of offended dignity. "I have two professed gardeners besides helpers, and as I spare no expense, I should think it very odd if my men did not produce superior flowers to any of my neighbours, though I understand nothing about them, and indeed never look at them."

"But I have still an advantage that you want: I am my own gardener; I am quite a fancier of auriculas; and as I really work hard for the distinction, I think you ought not to deny me the honour, which I hope our little Horticultural Society will confirm, of growing the best auriculas in this neighbourhood."

"They are indeed beautiful, quite unrivalled!" said Fanny; "but in my own little garden at Oakham, I can show you finer anemones than any that I see here, and you must positively come over to look at them."

"That I will do with pleasure," said Ringwood; "and to show you that I feel no envy,

though you are my rival in flowers, you must allow me to present you this little specimen."

So saying, he took out a pair of scissors, and cutting off one of the finest auriculas, placed it in the hand of the gratified and blushing Fanny, who, to turn off the confusion and agitation, of which she was conscious, though she knew not its cause, said that she had already been robbing him, and must obtain his pardon for one theft, before she consented to commit another. In a tone of playful, bantering exaggeration, she then gave an account of the difficulties they had experienced in threading the labyrinthine passages of the house, explained her discovery of the apple-room, and confessed the depredation she had committed, hoping he would forgive it, since the crumpling was her favourite apple, and one which she was the more tempted to purloin upon the present occasion, because her father's gardener, holding them to be a degenerate apple, never sent any up to table at the Hall. Ringwood laughed heartily at her statement, gave her full absolution for her petty theft, apologised to Lady Susan and Mr. Frampton

for the inhospitable reception they had encountered at his gate, and then proceeded to joke with so much unaffected good-humour on the sometimes awkward and sometimes ludicrous occurrences to which his reduced establishment had exposed him, that it was quite manifest he considered the change rather creditable to him than otherwise, and much more calculated to afford amusement than to excite regret.

Mr. Frampton now mentioned, not without his usual pompous flourishes, that he expected a fine lively turtle from London, asking him to dine upon it on the following Friday; an invitation which Ringwood regretted his inability to accept, as he had promised to go over on that day to take his dinner with honest Farmer Patching.

“Put him off then,” said Mr. Frampton; “send an excuse; you would not, surely, give up turtle for beans and bacon.”

“Certainly not, for I am very fond of turtle, and don’t often get it; but I would rather give up any feast than hurt the feelings of an honest man, as I unquestionably should do were Patch-

ing to learn that I had put a slight upon him, in order to accept an invitation at the Hall."

"Well, then, I suppose I must alter my day, a thing I very seldom do; but I have not yet asked the Doctor, nor any one else. Will you come, then, on Saturday?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

Lady Susan now reminded her husband that they had other visits to make, bowed with a distant air of hauteur to Ringwood, and taking Augusta's arm, immediately commenced her retreat towards the house. "La! are you going already?" exclaimed Fanny. "Don't forget your promise, Mr. Ringwood, to come over soon and look at my anemones. Did you not say you had some others at the farther end of the garden? I must have a peep at them before I go," and away she scudded along the walk. "Not half so fine as mine," she cried, as soon as she could get breath, after rejoining the party in the hall; "but I dare say you won't believe me, so mind you come over to judge for yourself." Ringwood renewed his promise, and handed the party into the car-

riage, which had scarcely driven from the door, when Lady Susan's indignation burst upon her husband for condescending to give way to Farmer Patching, and altering the day of his party to humour the insolence of *Farmer* Ringwood. Augusta, who had observed a supercilious silence during the whole of the visit, now found her speech, declaring that, in her opinion, her father had perfectly humiliated himself, considering Ringwood's reduced situation, and more especially the nature of the engagement he had so rudely presumed to plead.

“Why, really,” said Mr. Frampton, “it did not strike me so much at the moment, but it certainly was a great want of respect, considering that he was speaking to a person so much richer than himself, and who has the honour, moreover, of being a magistrate, and one of the Verderers of His Majesty's Forest; but I believe it was rather ignorance of good manners, than any intentional irreverence, and therefore I shall overlook it, especially as the poor fellow does not often taste turtle now-a-days; and besides, I sadly

want to show him the conservatory and the new stables."

"This is the first time," said Augusta sneeringly, "that we have ever had the honour of being received by a cook-maid, bedaubed with flour to the elbows."

"Perhaps the Hatch is the only house at which we visit," observed Fanny, "where the other servants are in the habit of being sent out of the way upon charitable missions to the sick and the poor."

"As to his conduct towards myself," said Mr. Frampton, anxious to escape from even the suspicion of having submitted to the smallest indignity, "it could proceed from nothing but ignorance; and, indeed, the man must clearly be more than half a fool, or he would never have become responsible for his father's debts."

"Was he not, then, compelled to do so by law?" inquired Fanny.

"Not in the least," replied her father.

"Weak-witted gull!" ejaculated Lady Susan.

“ Poor Farmer Ringwood !” exclaimed Augusta.

“ I had better say nothing,” cried Fanny ;
“ for notwithstanding the assertion of the crafty Frenchman, to whom we were alluding, I maintain that we may conceal our thoughts by holding our tongues, as well as by letting them run. Let no one, however, imagine that our English proverb holds good in this instance, and that my silence gives consent to what I hear.”

CHAPTER V.

Oft he exclaim'd—"How meek! how mild! how kind!
With her 'twere cruel but to seem unkind;
When I take my leave
It pains my heart to think how her's will grieve.
'Tis heav'n on earth with such a wife to dwell;
I am in raptures to have sped so well!"

* * * *

This made him anxious to detect the cause
Of all that boasting—"Wants my friend applause?
This plainly proves him not at perfect ease."

CRABBE.

IN the midst of all the exertion and anxiety occasioned by the rescue of Mary and George from their perilous situation in the waters, and the subsequent delay occasioned by his speeding to Hordle for a surgeon, Henry did not for

a moment forget old Nettletop's nephew Hodge, whose final enlistment as a soldier he was most solicitous to prevent. Having mounted the black mare which he had borrowed from the Captain of the smugglers, he galloped over to Christchurch, only apprehensive that the time he had inevitably spent in the neighbourhood of Hordle might defeat his present benevolent object. On his arrival at Christchurch, he inquired out the quarters of the recruiting-party, to which he proceeded, and on obtaining an interview with Hodge, had the gratification of learning that he had not yet been sworn before a magistrate, but was about to set out in a few minutes for that purpose. Henry knew that his having anticipated this ceremony would very materially facilitate the procurement of the discharge; but entertaining considerable doubts whether the young recruit, disheartened as he was by Lucy's jilting conduct, would not insist upon fulfilling his engagement, he proceeded to argue him out of his apprehended purpose with a logical preciseness and formality very characteristic of himself, but not exactly adapted

to the comprehension of his rustic auditor. First, he expatiated upon the folly of his punishing himself for the misconduct of another, and exposing himself to a thousand unknown evils for the sake of forgetting one single misfortune of no very aggravated character. Secondly, he developed the principles of the Malthusian theory, observing, that the productions of the earth could only be increased in an arithmetical ratio, whereas population had a constant tendency towards a geometrical increase; whence he endeavoured to prove to honest Hodge, that as he was not in a situation authorizing him to marry, he ought to submit to that moral restraint which many of his superiors were obliged to observe; and thirdly, he would have enforced the imperative duty of his staying at home to comfort his aged uncle and aunt, had not a few explanatory words from the recruit convinced him that there was not the smallest necessity either for argument or eloquence.

Although Hodge's immediate cause of enlisting had been the disappointment of all his hopes from Lucy's inconstancy, his imagination,

inflamed by the flourishing statements and tempting rhodomontades of the recruiting serjeant, had conjured up certain visions of glory, which descending upon his shoulders in the shape of two golden epaulettes, had confirmed his military ardour, and determined him to accept the proffered chance of becoming a field-officer. A few hours' conversation, however, with some of the soldiers at their quarters, and above all, a glimpse that he obtained of the mangled back of a poor fellow who had been recently flogged, dispelled all these fascinating dreams as suddenly as they had been formed.

So far, therefore, from interposing any difficulties in the way of his discharge, he was no sooner apprised that it might be obtained, than he was eager to second Henry's object, and expressed the warmest gratitude for his friendly interference. Hitherto, every thing had proved auspicious; but no sooner did the serjeant understand their wishes, than impediments started up in formidable array. True, his recruit had not yet been sworn, but he had received the money, which legally bound him

to enlist : he was a marvellously proper, tall young fellow, fit for a grenadier, precisely such a one as the army wanted ; and it was but reasonable, therefore, that his Majesty, (whose name he never mentioned without a loyal benediction,) should be handsomely paid for foregoing his services. Perfectly coinciding in the justice of these arguments, Henry slipped his purse into the hand of the serjeant, who had no sooner ascertained that it was filled with guineas, than he thrust it into his pocket, observing, that the King was no extortioner, and that moderate, and, indeed, altogether inadequate as was the amount, he had no doubt he would be perfectly satisfied. Strictly charging them both to observe a profound secrecy upon the occurrences of the morning, he then dismissed them by a back-door, recommending them to quit the town without delay ; after which he immediately proceeded to count the contents of his purse ; for such was the fervent zeal which the honest serjeant participated with many other noisy aspirants to the praise of superior loyalty, that

he even loved to contemplate the king's image, especially when it was stamped upon little yellow bits of metal. How much of this gold actually reached the treasury, or the king's privy purse, we have never been able to ascertain; but from the luxurious manner in which the serjeant lived for some time afterwards, at one of the principal inns of Christchurch, we have no reason to suppose that he stinted himself of that fair factorage and commission which, in similar cases, the most loyal of his betters are in the habit of deducting.

Prouder of his ransomed recruit than if he were a conqueror with a captive king in his train, Henry walked his horse towards Hordle, Hodge trudging on foot beside him, talking of nothing but the subject which was ever uppermost in his own mind—the infidelity of Lucy Haselgrove, who, as he stated, had actually quitted her home, and gone off by the stage to London, giving out that she was about to marry a fine gentleman, and would shortly return in her own carriage to Roydon, which was the place of her residence. Henry comforted him

in the best way he could for the loss of his faithless mistress, and continued chatting familiarly with him, until, upon referring to his watch, he found that if he proceeded thus slowly, he would hardly have time to return the black mare to her owner within the two or three hours for which he had borrowed her. It was not likely that the animal would be wanted ; indeed, he had been desired to keep her as long as it suited him ; but so sacred did he hold a promise, whatever might be its nature ; such was his habitual reverence for truth, that he would have been much hurt, had he failed even for a single minute in redeeming his pledge ; and he accordingly pushed forward for Hordle, appointing Hodge to meet him at the public-house where he had left the Captain. His scrupulousness in a matter of such apparent indifference, will to many, perhaps, appear fastidious and squeamish ; but his respect for strict veracity was a genuine, not an affected feeling, which, if it assumed a certain air of precision and austerity of principle in so young a man, was, at least, excusable in one who

observed all the other virtues with a correspondent rigour.

On his arrival at Hordle he sought out the Captain, and with his watch in his hand, to show that he was within time, informed him that his mare was in the stable, discussing a double feed of corn with which he had seen her supplied. Here he was shortly after rejoined by Hodge, when they proceeded together to Nettletop's cottage. "Why, sure as fate," cried the old man, as he saw them approaching, "there be a couple of chaps coming towards the cottage; ay, and I dare say they do come to bespeak our honey, which is a pretty deal better than the forest honey. I say, dame, can'st make out who they be? for my eyes—"

"Your eyes, Johnny Nettletop!" interposed the superannuated wife, with an expression of some contempt; "thee hast no more eyes nor a mole! Mine be as good as ever, and I can see with half a look that it be our Hodge come back, with the young gentleman that was here yesterday."

“ Heart alive ! and so it be, as sure as ever I’m standing here. Mercy on us ! then he baint gone for a sodger after all. Well, I’m heartily glad on’t, that’s what I am ; though I should ha’ liked to see the brave lad in a scarlet jacket, and that ’s the truth on’t, if it wouldn’t ha’ took him away from us.”

Some vague notion of his having enlisted seemed now to enter the old woman’s head, for she twirled her spinning-wheel with increased velocity, and began singing in a cracked treble, “ A sodger for me ! a sodger for me ! ” while Nettletop welcomed his nephew back with much cordiality, and listened to the detail of the manner in which his liberation had been affected with an interest that manifested itself in sundry interrupting exclamations of “ Dear heart ! dear heart ! only to think of that ! ” accompanied by fresh and hearty shakes of his nephew’s hand, as if to congratulate him on his return home. A blank look, however, suddenly overspread his countenance, when Hodge declared that, as far as his little hoard of money extended, he should wish it to be paid over to his liberator

in part reduction of what he had so generously advanced ; although the uncle's complacency was quickly restored when Henry protested that he would not touch a single sixpence, expressing a hope that his friend Hodge would receive a favour in the same frank and noble spirit with which he was sure that he would confer one.

“ Poor Hodge ! thee saved up every shilling on it for thy marriage with Lucy, didn't thee, boy ? ” inquired Nettle-top, whose thoughts were now absorbed by the money.

“ Ay ! indeed, every farthing on it,” replied the nephew with a sigh.

“ Why then, boy, thee can't want it, for Lucy be run away to Lunnun, and so the money can't do better than bide where it be,” said the old man, chuckling inwardly at the thought of his ingenuity in having entrapped Hodge into this confession.

“ What ! hast taken to ploughing by moon-light, that thee never came home to supper last night ? ” cried the dame. “ Well, it saved three rashers of bacon, any how. Didn't they talk of a sodger ? Fackins, Hodge ! I *should* like

to see thee in a fine shining helmet with a sword by thy side !—Well, Master Stubbs," she continued, addressing her wandering speech to Henry ; " what bee'st a going to offer us for our honey ? not wild honey out of the forest, mind that neighbour, but all made in our own hives."

Henry assured her that he was not come to treat for honey at present, though he might be tempted to taste it at some future opportunity, and having recommended the still disconsolate-looking Hodge to forget his inconstant sweetheart as soon as he could, he departed from the cottage, overloaded with thanks and blessings from both uncle and nephew. It was late in the evening that, after a long and weary walk, he arrived at Thaxted, overwhelmed with bodily fatigue, but enjoying a mental solace in which his nature particularly delighted, when he reflected that, in the course of that busy day, he had been enabled to confer the most seasonable and important benefits upon his fellow-creatures.

When he recited his adventures, however, in

his next morning's visit to the Penguins, in which relation he suppressed the fact of Hodge's discharge having been procured by bribery, lest he should implicate the serjeant, his conduct did not by any means receive the unqualified approbation of the geologist. "Zooks! my young Domine!" he exclaimed; "these are ticklish matters, very ticklish matters, and such as no wise man would have interfered in. Ten to one but it brings you into a scrape with the Government; for you have been actually assisting in the escape of a smuggler, one who had doubtless been engaged with fire-arms, which is a capital offence, and having been winged, was considered as a prisoner already secured, and I dare say would have been presently picked up by the revenue-boat. Did it never occur to you that you might be exposing yourself to a premunire or perhaps get exchequered for such imprudent interference?"

"Nothing occurred to me," replied Henry, "but to follow the dictates of humanity; which I should have done in precisely the same manner, had it rendered me liable to a hundred

premunires. It may sometimes be the duty of a community, represented by the law, to take away life; but it is always the duty of individuals to preserve it; and a man is not the less a fellow-creature because he happens to be a smuggler."

"Do you hear that, Mr. P.?" said the wife, giving him a nudge with her elbow; "I hate all such pitiful advice. Thus to talk of smugglers and brave men who get us cheap French silks at the risk of their lives, comes with a very bad grace from one who formerly——however, that's neither here nor there. For my part, I think Mr. Melcomb has acted most nobly in saving the poor wounded man; but as to the woman, I don't know what to say, for there's a sad set of hussies connected with the smugglers.—Was the creature young or handsome?"

"She seemed to be both; but I only cast one glance at her, when I threw her over my shoulder, and ran up Hordle Cliff with her as fast as I could."

"Hordle Cliff was it?" inquired the geologist, eagerly; "that's where the vein of shells

that we went to inspect comes out upon the sea. Did you see any of the univalves of the *argonauta* genus? I can show you the kind in my *Fossilia Hantoniensia*, and I sadly want a few more specimens to complete my collection."

"Stuff and nonsense, Mr. P.! Do you think Mr. Melcomb had time to be groping after your rubbishy snail-shells and cockle-shells, and what not, when he was running up the gap with a woman on his shoulder? I really hope, Mr. Melcomb, you will never think of seeing the creature again; for I can assure you, all those connected with the smugglers are a very low, bad, profligate, abandoned set. It would have been no great loss, I dare say, had you left her to be drowned."

"If her life has been so bad, as you suspect, she was the less fit for dying. However, I have no present intention of revisiting her; and, indeed, I never inquired her residence."

"I hope you never will: and as for that good-for-nothing slut, Lucy Haselgrove," continued Mrs. Penguin, "I have no patience with

her. Fine doings, indeed! I wonder what the world will come to next! Old Nettletop's nephew has a good riddance of her; for she who could misconduct herself before marriage, would do the same afterwards; and every wretch that doesn't make a good wife to a good husband, ought to be hung."

"Faithful, fond creature! high-principled woman! invaluable wife!" whispered the husband apart to Henry; and then continued aloud, "Ah, my dear Laura, we cannot expect all the world to be so happy as ourselves. I flatter myself that I am not the worst husband in the parish, and sure I am that I have the very best wife in the whole county."

If his conjugal happiness had depended upon the pertinacity with which he asserted it both to himself and others, Penguin would indeed have been an enviable man; but the very vehemence with which he maintained it, was but an effort to browbeat and put down the misgivings of his own spirit, which sometimes whispered to him that he had been cajoled into an incongruous union, and had found an imperious

mistress, who, under the insidious guise of blandishment and fondness, ruled him more despotically than was quite consistent with his own private notions of manly independence. So far from divulging these doubts, however, he was perpetually struggling to conquer, and at all events took good care to suppress them; having sense enough to know, that where we have committed an error that is irremediable, our wisest course is to conceal its unpleasant consequences, as much as possible, both from ourselves and others.

The conversation now turned upon the subject of the fair, the attempt to abolish which had been abandoned by the magistrates and their brother *Hidalgos*, from the impossibility of coming to any agreement with the Lord of the Manor as to his compensation for stallage, and other customary dues. When Welbeck saw the wealth and weight of the parties treating with him for this object, he constantly rose in his demands, a circumstance for which his clerk, old Wiverley, as constantly found or invented some plausible excuse; so that at length

the treaty was broken off altogether, and the fair was left to be prosecuted with that additional spirit which its threatened forcible suppression had widely awakened, especially among the lower orders. Nor was the determination to uphold it confined by any means to this class. Ringwood, and others of equal respectability, had not only signified their intention to countenance it by their presence and participation, but had opened a subscription to purchase prizes for the successful candidates in the rural sports and games which it was resolved to celebrate. With his usual amiable inconsistency, Dr. Dotterel vehemently condemned the fair, but gave a hundred faggots for a large bonfire, observing, that as the gentry had not been able to abate the nuisance, there could be no harm in amusing the children; and excusing the act to his brother abolitionists by declaring that the faggots were so wet and rotten they could never have been used in his own house. Of all these proceedings Henry had been a staunch advocate, as well as a liberal contributor to the fund; and it is needless to add that Tim Wicks

of the George, fat Sam Tapps of the Cricketers, and indeed all the neighbouring landlords, feeling assured that Welbeck, the chief acting magistrate, would secure to them the renewal of their licenses, followed the dictates of their own interest, and generously, or we should, perhaps, rather say calculatingly, aided the subscription fund.

In the hope of confirming his own doubtful gentility, Penguin had eagerly sided with the vicar and the village grandees, in whose behalf, as was his custom in whatever he espoused, he had been prodigiously busy and bustling. His spouse, like Mahomet's fabled coffin, had been held in a state of suspension by contrary attractions. She was not less anxious than her husband to identify herself with the gentry, by talking of the vulgar low company which a fair was sure to collect, and of the disorderly proceedings to which it would inevitably give rise; of all which she expressed a most aristocratical abhorrence. But then, on the other hand, she was vain of her handsome person; she was fond of showy dress; she had just received from

London a flaming new pelisse, with a staring hat and feathers, and there was no place so favourable for their display as the fair, which, if it brought together a crowd of vulgarians in the evening, occasioned also a large morning congregation of the better sort from the whole surrounding district. This last consideration predominating at length over its antagonist feeling, she was glad that the fair was to take place, willingly foregoing any gratification of her pride in the superior pleasure of indulging her personal vanity. Penguin was pretty much in the same predicament, for the bustle, and the confluence, and the gossip of a fair, were perfectly congenial to his garrulous, inquisitive character; and he therefore signified his intention of participating in its festivities, a resolution, however, which he had formed without reckoning with his hostess.

“Indeed, my dear Mr. P., you will do no such thing!” exclaimed his wife. “I’m sure it’s a blessing you have got me to think for you, since your own head runs upon nothing but stones, and shells, and nasty minerals, and such

like dirty rubbish. I wouldn't have you go for a thousand pounds, for the 'friends of the fair' are all providing themselves with ribbons, that they may know one another; and there is every probability, that if any of the opposite party are present, they will be insulted or maltreated. You, who have been so busy for the suppression, (I wish you wouldn't meddle so much in other people's matters,) will be particularly obnoxious, and I should die upon the spot if I were to see you in any danger. Heigho! the woman who is blessed with a good husband, cannot be too careful of him.—James! bring me a glass of wine; I declare the very thought of such a thing has made me quite qualmish."

"Gad now, my dear, you are frightened without a cause, you are indeed. It would look like cowardice were I to stay away, and I should like to show those saucy fellows that Mark Penguin—"

"Don't say another word, Mr. P., unless you wish to kill me outright. I will not have you go, and that's one word for all. Elated by having carried their point, these low tatterde-

malions are sure to create some disturbance, and if any assault upon you—Lud ! my very flesh creeps and feels all over goosy as I advert to it.”

“ If you are so apprehensive of tumult, you will not go yourself, of course, my dear.”

“ Oh ! I don’t care for myself, Mr. P. Besides, a lady will be always safe, and I’m sure Mr. Melcomb will be kind enough to take charge of me.”

Henry professed his readiness to do so, adding, that as he would be answerable for the orderly conduct of the people, he hoped Penguin would accompany them.

“ Not for worlds !” ejaculated the wife ; “ my mind is quite made up on this subject ; the very imagination of what might happen has quite overcome me. Where is this loitering James with the glass of wine ?” and she walked hastily out of the room, holding her smelling-bottle to her nose.

“ Gadso ! my young friend,” said Penguin, as she closed the door, “ that poor, tender-hearted creature cannot bear to think of my

being placed in any jeopardy. Not that I had any real intention of going to the fair, for I shall be off the first thing in the morning to Hordle Cliff to search for the shells I want, as I always intended to do. 'Pon my life, it's too bad of me to trifle thus with her feelings, but I threw out the idea just by way of a little experiment for our amusement. Character—the developement of character is my favourite foible, and you must confess, my young Domine, that I have drawn out hers most capitally. Poor Laura ! it's too bad though, too bad, 'pon my life !”

CHAPTER V.

Young gentleman, your spirits are too bold for your years: you have seen cruel proof of this man's strength: if you saw yourself with your eyes, or knew yourself with your judgment, the fear of your adventure would counsel you to a more equal enterprise. We pray you, for your own sake, to embrace your own safety, and give over this attempt.

SHAKSPEARE.

BRIGHT and cloudless arose the auspicious morning of the fair, which displayed its booths and banners, its stalls and stages, its shows, swings, and roundabouts, with a rejoicing spirit, as if each tent of the little encampment, as it gave its white canvass to the sun and its streamers to the breeze, triumphed in the victory it had achieved over the suppressionists, and reared

itself with all the pride that its ephemeral construction and lowly eminence would allow. Fired by an unanimous *esprit du corps*, the proprietors and occupants of these fragile tenements, in their determination to prosecute the festivities of the day with spirit, and to signalize the discomfiture of their opponents with becoming clangour, opened all their stentorian throats, and plied their unmusical instruments with a most unmerciful disregard of their auditors' ears. Not with a more stunning energy did the British drummers, when they marched into Paris after the battle of Waterloo, strike the first English drum that had been heard in the French capital for many centuries, than did the discordant musicians at Thaxted fair wrench from their several instruments the very *ne plus ultra* of dissonance that their natures admitted. The wild beasts, of which there was a large travelling menagerie, gave roar for roar, and answered bray for bray; Punch cackled, and chuckled, and crowed with a most bubble-and-squeak hilarity, and murdered his wooden wife with a marital nonchalance more than usually

comical: as they spun in the roundabouts, or were whirled up and down in swings, the children screeched and shouted with an uproariousness that had never been known before: the rows of gilt gingerbread hanging upon strings, absolutely dazzled the eyes with the resplendency of their glory as they swaggered in the sun; and that inexplicable appetite for gingerbread-nuts, which the English commonalty generally bring with them to such assemblages, seemed on the present occasion to be utterly insatiable.

Peasant girls, with their straw hats and cherry-coloured ribbons, and rustics in their smock-frocks tastefully embroidered with worsted, most of them wearing in their hats the little cockade, which attested that they were true blue, and "friends of the fair," wandered up and down, staring at the wonders of the show, chatting and flirting together, and cracking jokes and nuts with equal hilarity and glee: not a few poachers and smugglers, "*et hoc genus omne*," with which the vicinage abounded, disdaining the honest smock-frock, and yet cutting a much less

respectable figure in their shabby, patchwork clothes, seemed gratified that they could mix and innocently amuse themselves with the better conducted of their humble neighbours; while they manifestly felt dignified in their own estimation at being associated with their superiors in one common and harmless enjoyment. To what beneficial results this salutary feeling might conduce, were the recreations of the lower orders encouraged and extended, instead of being not less unwarrantably than injudiciously curtailed, it is not our province to determine; though it can hardly be doubted that a more frequent and friendly intercourse between the upper and lower classes of society would have a beneficent and civilizing effect on both. Greetings, and salutations, and congratulations, were heard upon all sides; "nods, and becks, and wreathed smiles" sate upon every countenance; the gentry flocked to the rendezvous in unusual clusters, notwithstanding the absence of some of the disappointed suppressionists; and in such an assemblage of all ranks, it is needless to state, that many of those who have figured in these pages were to be seen

mingling in the sports of the day, or sitting apart to gaze at them.—Although the goodnatured Dr. Dotterel had provided a bonfire for the amusement of the fair-going urchins, he was too staunch a suppressionist to be present; and his sister, who not only governed herself most implicitly by the Doctor, [but professed an undisguised horror of the enormities of a fair, took good care not to be seen within its unhallowed precincts. Gout, pomposity, and a splenetic feeling of disappointment at having been baffled in his object, kept Mr. Frampton also at home; and if Lady Susan ordered the barouche, and accompanied her two daughters to the scene of action, it was rather to thwart and annoy her husband, than from any interest in the proceedings of the day, or sympathy with the amusements of the lower orders, for whom she felt, and invariably avowed, the most supreme contempt.

Not such were the feelings that brought honest Squire Ringwood to the spot, his healthy countenance beaming with the happiness that was reflected from those around him. Active

and prominent in the regulation of all the festivities, he might be deemed the ringleader of the audacious yeomen, peasants, and commonalty, who, thinking themselves entitled to one day's recreation and pastime in the course of the year, were naturally indignant that it should be grudged to them by those who had three hundred and sixty-four holidays besides. Ringwood, however, who was not less solicitous to enforce good order, than to promote fun, frolic, and cheerfulness, earnestly recommended all his auditors to be merry and wise; reminding those who displayed their blue cockades, and vociferously dubbed themselves "friends of the fair," that they would best evince the truth of the assertion, whether it applied to the lasses leaning upon their arms, or to the festive anniversary which they were met to celebrate, by sobriety and good-humour, which would be the surest warrant for the future continuance of the statute, and the most complete refutation of all the calumnies and sinister prognostications of the suppressionists.

"The very sight of these rosy, laughing, red-

armed girls," he exclaimed to one of his friends, " makes the heart laugh with them ; and as to these honest bumpkins, who enjoy a day's idleness with the keener relish, because they have purchased it with previous labour, I warrant there are round about us more happy hearts beating under a smock-frock, than you will find beneath a star in a dozen crowded drawing-rooms."

" Wauns, Squire !" cried a young peasant who had overheard him, " that 'n be a true saying ; for when I do put on this here frock,—it were worked for me by Patty Patching, you see, and I do only wear it o' Sundays, and holidays, and such like,—the very moment I do put 'n over me, I feel fit to leap out on 't again ; it do make me so merry and lissome, and yet I can't tell how it be !"

" Perhaps Patty Patching has some share in the magic ?" observed the Squire ; " and by her blushing and sidling away in such confusion, I would bet a trifle that this tidy-looking lass is the identical Patty, and that she is your sweetheart besides."

“Snails! how come you to find out that ’un? Sure enough, Squire, thee hast hit the right nail on the head, for her and me has kept company together this three months.”

“And for the sake of Patty’s downcast eyes and burning cheeks,” said the kind-hearted Squire, “I promise you and your friends a wedding dinner when you have made up your minds to be married.—Ah, Tony!” continued Ringwood, addressing the waiter of the George, “how comes it that you have got leave of absence from the tap, on such a busy day as this?”

“Why, lookee here, Sir,” said Tony, who wore a face of most egregious and asinine glee; “Master Wicks told I that I might just take a run among the booths, if so be I were back again afore a chap could say Jack Robinson; and so I jist ran off to these two young women, friends of mine, Sir, you see—”

“And which of them, Tony, is your sweetheart?” interposed Ringwood.

“Why, Sir, this here big’n be Molly Stubbs, and though I always call her my sweetheart, she do call I nothing but Pig’s-eyes, and Gawky,

and Johnny Raw, and Chuckle-head, and Loblolly, and such like; and hang me! if she would walk through the fair along with I, unless her sister Meg—(this here's Meg)—come along wi' she, which is more nor I can comperhend!"

"Ah, Tony, Tony, there are many besides you that cannot comprehend them, for most women are paradoxes."

"Come, come, Squire, no foul words: Molly and Meg baint a pair o' doxies, dang if they be! but as decent and vartuous young women as any in the fair; more shame for them as says otherwise, danged if it baint!" So saying, Tony trudged onwards, his sniggering looks being suddenly changed into such a ludicrous attempt at dignity and dudgeon, that his strapping inamorata and her sister, instead of sympathising with their champion, only burst into a horse laugh at the sight of his rueful and yet vacant visage.

Pompey the Black, surrounded by a rabblement of boys, who followed him whithersoever he went, had been alternately cutting jokes,

capers, pop-guns, and whistles, varied by throwing an occasional somerset, or trolling some snatch of a merry negro song, to the prodigious delight of his juvenile auditory, when the sight of a noble African lion, that formed part of the menagerie in the fair, recalling thoughts of his native land, of the anguish he had suffered when originally torn from it, of the miserable slavery to which he had in the first instance been doomed, and under which so many thousands of his countrymen were still groaning, suddenly checked his mirth, and banished the radiant smile that usually gladdened his features. After gazing upon the imprisoned animal for some time in silence, but with an expression that showed him to be busy with recollections of the past, he hummed over to himself the burthen of a negro ditty, as if to recover its almost forgotten words, and then, to a doleful tune, and with a saddened look, little in accordance with his customary vivacity, began to sing,

Da Blackee man, on da vessel stand,
Dat tear him away from him native land,

He groan for da future, he groan for da past,
And da tears on him fettered hands fall fast.

Nah-ne-ahi-noh ! nah-ne-ahi-noh !

He look on da land where him play'd as a boy,
Where him grew up a man in freedom and joy :
His home, wife, child, him shall see again nebber,
But toil in a far distant land for ebber !

Nah-ne-ahi-noh ! nah-ne-ahi-noh !

He look up to Hebben, an moan an sob,
An his heart amost break wid a hebby throb,
As, rader dan lib an die a slave,
He prays to be laid in an Abrican grave.

Nah-ne-ahi-noh ! nah-ne-ahi-noh !

Melancholy themes, looks, and sounds, however, were so uncongenial to Pompey's temperament, that instead of finishing the ditty which he had so often heard sung by his fellow sufferers in Jamaica, he broke off in the middle, endeavoured to banish sorrow by throwing a rapid succession of somersets, that soon made the young fry yield him space for his gambols, and suddenly recovering his equilibrium, he chanted a snatch of a very different description :—

“ Cuning Nigger a monkey see,
Up a top o’ da cocoa-tree,
So he fling a stone, and cry, He ! he !
Ha, ha, ha ! Calaloo !

Monkey got no stone, but instead,
He fling a nut at da Nigger’s head,
‘ Bery good change !’ da Nigger said.
Ha, ha, ha ! Calaloo !”

At the conclusion of which lyrical specimen he began to dance with great energy, summoning the numerous urchins, that formed a halo of sparkling eyes around him, and shouting,

“ Come let us dance and sing,
While all Barbadoes’ bells shall ring,
Lub scrape da fiddle-tring,
And Benus play da lute !”

At this juncture, the overseer of the poor, who had volunteered to act as an extra-constable for the special occasion of the fair, approached the assemblage, and being anxious to exercise his little brief authority, displayed his official baton, exclaiming in a most magisterial voice, as he lifted up his head, which was dignified with a large cocked-hat : “ Away with

you! you young tatterdemalions, and let us have none of this obstropolous halloburloo!" Awed at the sight of a symbol which was associated in their minds with the cage and the black-hole, the youngsters drew off to a safe distance, and ceased their merriment; but very different was the effect of this interference upon Pompey. Ignorant of the total dissimilarity in their several functions, the very word Overseer, connected as it was with the recollection of the cruelties he had suffered from an officer of the same name in Jamaica, awakened all his indignation, and we are bound to confess, that he forgot for the moment his characteristic urbanity, as he shook his finger at the offender, and angrily exclaimed, "Oo go to da debble, Massa Overseer! What oo mean by obstropolous? dam innorant fellah! Oo no speak sush good Ingish as Pompey, and me nebber in Engand 'septin dis once, and oo been here ebber so many times. Away wid ooseff, oo innorant rebberbate! Gog! me lily tire, or else me take oo op na ma arms, run wid oo to da George, poke oo head in da kishen-fire, spite oo cocked-hat, and nebber take

um out again till oo face so black as great Papau monkey !” The overseer, who liked not the menacing looks of the Negro, and had moreover no valid plea for the exercise of his constabular authority, thought it most discreet to pocket this affront and pass on, when Pompey quickly resumed his frolicksome mood, and was again presently surrounded by his bevy of capering and shouting striplings.

Lady Susan Frampton, the motive for whose presence at the fair we have already explained, having ordered her open barouche to draw up in a position where her splendid equipage, showy horses, and flaming liveries might be seen to the most advantage, surveyed the motley assemblage, and all the mummary of the scene with a most imperturbable air of disdainful hauteur. Small as was the probability that any eligible patrician would be present at such a vulgar festival, Miss Frampton, who never threw away a connubial chance, however remote, and whose vanity and self-love prompted her to be on all occasions *tirée à quatre épingles*, had attired herself in scrupulous accord-

ance with the latest fashion, and standing up in the most becoming attitude she could assume, awaited such homage of admiration as might fall to her lot, not ungratified at receiving it, even from the bumpkins and country lasses whom she despised. No complacency, however, sat upon her features, which wore the same sour distasteful expression as her mother's, both being in accordance with that most pitiful, miserable, and self-punishing of all affectations, that prompts the upper classes in England carefully to suppress every outward appearance of enjoyment, pronouncing it, forsooth, an evidence of vulgarity. Were he now alive, the laughter-condemning Lord Chesterfield might see the foppish solemnity which he recommended, extended to dancing and all other occasions of nominal festivity and amusement; but which, to judge by the countenances of the participants, might rather be deemed acts of penance and self-mortification. Were our countrywomen, in particular, but aware how much the physical beauty of their faces is injured by this moral ugliness; how decidedly, even with su-

perior charms, it renders them inferior in attractive amiability to their more smiling and gracious neighbours; how painfully every Englishman, upon his return from the continent, is struck by the sullen, supercilious looks scowling upon him from faces that would be otherwise faultless, they would surely endeavour to discard this most repulsive and disparaging of all our national habitudes.

Oh! how totally dissimilar from such frowning scorn, was the sportive, ever-changing, and ever bewitching expression, which with a charm infinitely more beautiful than beauty, made the features of Fanny respond to every feeling of her heart, participating, as she did, with the exuberant gladness of a child, in the happiness that surrounded her; enjoying all the pranks and pastimes of the scene; and not even ashamed to laugh with the unrestrained mirth of her whole heart, at the ludicrous drolleries of Punch. Vain were the rebukes of her mother, vain the cold sneers or sarcasm of her sister; she confessed herself to be the giggling vulgarian that they termed her, but objected

to the addition of the word simpleton; playfully observing, that it was the greatest of all wisdom to make ourselves happy, and innocently enjoy life; and that therefore she seriously considered herself to be much more of a philosopher than a fool.

“Seriously!” exclaimed Augusta, in a taunting tone; “you never considered any thing seriously in your life, and I fear you never will.”

“Nay, nay,” replied Fanny, “I am most unaffectedly serious, I can assure you, in my firm resolution never to be affectedly so.”

With an additional zest did she enter into the spirit of the scene, when Ringwood, who had quickly discovered her presence, planted himself by the side of the carriage, encouraged her cheerful conversation by his own frank hilarity, detailed the arrangements he had made for promoting the festivities of the day, and showed her the prizes which were to be distributed among the successful candidates in the rural sports.

“Oh! how very kind and considerate you are,

my dear Mr. Ringwood !” suddenly exclaimed Fanny, in the middle of their colloquy ; “and what a sad, giddy, ungrateful girl am I, never to have thanked you for the basket of crumpling apples, the pots of beautiful auriculas, and other plants you have been so good as to send me. You cannot think how delighted I was to receive them, and what great care I will take of them for your sake—that is to say—I mean, because you know I am so particularly fond of flowers.” She blushed, and was a little confused, from the apprehension that she had been betrayed by her gratitude into too great a warmth of expression. Augusta looked accusingly at her mother, Lady Susan darted a glance of unutterable rebuke at Fanny, the delinquent blushed still deeper, and complaining of the heat of the sun, hastily put up her parasol to screen herself ; but Ringwood, who had rightly interpreted the looks of the respective parties, was delighted with the spontaneous fervency of Fanny’s acknowledgments, which he considered to evince more real delicacy than all the formal, cold, guarded phraseology with

which Augusta, and other fashionables of the same character, would have endeavoured to mask their thoughts and designs. Knowing the innocency of her own heart, Fanny presently recovered her self-possession, when the conversation between herself and Ringwood, (for the others were still too much irritated and scandalized to participate in it,) proceeded with the same unconstrained vivacity as before.

Nearly opposite to Lady Susan's splendid equipage was drawn up the crazy, old-fashioned vehicle of Gideon Welbeck, drawn by the sorry horses which Henry had seen in the court-yard of the Manor-house on the first day of his arrival at Thaxted. The justice was within it, accompanied by his daughter Emily, whose meek alabaster features exhibited an expression of sedate complacency, for it could hardly be called cheerfulness. Two circumstances had combined to produce this happier physiognomy; the first, and by far the most important, was her deliverance from the dreaded visit and detested addresses of the profligate Lord Fawley, who had been prevented by sudden illness from keeping

his appointment at the Manor-house, and whose malady was of a nature that would probably compel him to hasten to the south of Europe, as the sole remaining chance of recovering his health: her second source of gratification was the sympathy of her benignant heart with the manifest gladness of the surrounding crowd, and her delight at the unexpected and most unusual reception which her father had experienced from the whole assemblage. In general, few people could be less popular than Welbeck; but the "friends of the fair," forgetting that he had advocated their cause solely from interested motives, and willing, perhaps, to accept him as their champion, not so much on account of his individual merits, as to mortify the suppressionists, received him, as his carriage drew up, with three hearty cheers; while several bands subsequently testified their respect as they passed, by waving their hats to the accompaniment of vociferous acclamations.

Whatever may be their averments to the contrary, few men are insensible to the voice of popular applause. Upon the desolate, guilty, mise-

nable heart of Welbeck it fell with such a soothing influence, that he sought most eagerly to convert this ebullition of momentary satisfaction at his recent conduct into an approving tribute to his whole past life. Gold had been the darling object of his latter days ; and the consciousness of the vast power which his wealth gave him over the world, even although its potency should never be called into action, had afforded him a secret, solitary, gloomy satisfaction through many a long and otherwise pleasureless year. But this talisman was not omnipotent, it could not blunt the fangs of that worm which, while it gnaws the soul, acquires its imperishability ; it could not deaden the stings of remorse ; it could neither annul past crime, nor insure future impunity ; and therefore was it that Welbeck, finding a momentary solace in the boast, loved upon all occasions to blazon forth and dwell upon his conduct as a magistrate, the sole portion of his character which was free from self-reproach, and unassailable by the accusations of others. His eager restless eyes sparkled with an additional brightness as they now

darted their rapid glances around, a languid smile lighted up his haggard features, like a gleam of sunshine passing over an exhausted volcano, and there was a tone of unwonted exhilaration in his voice, as he exclaimed, "Why, ay, my darling Emily, these rustics, that deafen us with their shouts, are, after all, not utterly deficient in discernment. True it is, that because I will not lavish my substance like such wasteful prodigals as my Lord Latchmore, or the pompous Frampton—the owner of yonder gaudy equipage—some of them will dub me a miserable curmudgeon, a grasping extortioner, forsooth, a greedy, grinding usurer. But when the hour of trial comes, when they have to compare me with my neighbours and brother magistrates, then do they discover their true friend, and then do they honestly, though somewhat vociferously, avouch their real sentiments in my favour. Emy, my child," he continued, taking his daughter's hand, and pressing it to his heart, "it is a pride, a consolation, to feel that I deserve to be popular among them; for which of them can charge a magistrate with malpractices,

and say unto Gideon Welbeck, as Nathan said unto David, ‘ thou art the man?’ *Parcere subjectis, et debellare superbos*—to spare the oppressed and humble the oppressor has ever been my rule of conduct ; nor have I had occasion to seek the sorry comfort of Lord Bacon, when he declared that, although he might have sometimes sold justice, he had never sold injustice. May not my withered heart, then, find a transient pleasure in the sight of these festivities ; shall not these acclamations be music to an ear that has so long been torn and scared by the maddening, though inaudible whispers of the awful ‘ still voice within ?’ ”

It was the curse of the unhappy Welbeck, that even the solitary recreation which he found in reflecting upon his integrity as a magistrate, was but a snatch of hazardous and uncertain relief. Sometimes it would lull him into a temporary oblivion of his own woes, while at others it only recalled them with an embittering and fearful sharpness. Some such painful association had been awakened by the conclusion of his speech, for, after a pause, he

started, exclaiming with an altered look, and in an agitated voice, "Ha! were it no more than this I could endure it well. It is nothing to become dust, to be forgotten altogether, or only remembered to be execrated: for what is death compared to the anguish of living in the incessant horror of shame and discovery here—perhaps of a public and ignominious passport to eternal punishment hereafter? O Emily, my child! if you should ever know a wretch thus circumstanced, think not of his guilt, however atrocious it may be, but of the deep, dark, secret, hopeless misery to which he has doomed himself, and you will pity and deplore; ay, such a gentle nature as yours might be almost won to compassionate and to forgive him."

Welbeck hid his face with his hand, leaned back in the carriage, and remained evidently struggling with the most distressing reminiscences, while Emily continued silent, knowing by past experience that any direct attempt to comfort him might rather aggravate than allay his agitation. From this embarrassment she was relieved by the unexpected appearance of

Henry Melcomb, who presented himself at the carriage-window, inquired anxiously concerning her health, and expressed his delight at seeing her at the fair. Welbeck, roused from his painful reverie by the first sound of a stranger's voice, started suddenly up in the carriage, and recovering, as if by a convulsive effort of the mind, his self-possession, entered into conversation with an eagerness that seemed designed to dissipate all the gloomy thoughts that had so recently haunted him. Emily and Henry were not less willingly disposed to prolong and to enjoy their colloquy, but unfortunately the latter had a female upon his arm, who was so far from participating in their pleasure, that she resolved to bring it to a speedy conclusion. This was Mrs. Penguin. She had begun to entertain a strong predilection for Henry, which circumstance, and the desire to enjoy the pleasure of his society without the presence of her husband, whom she secretly despised, had originated those pretended apprehensions for Penguin's safety, which had furnished her an excuse for compelling him to remain at home. Upon

this occasion she saluted her companion, as they strolled about arm-in-arm, by no other appellation than that of "Henry;" a degree of familiarity which, upon so short an acquaintance, might have startled a practised man of the world, though the party thus addressed was too indifferent about the little conventional forms of society to notice this deviation from them. No sooner did she perceive the pleasure he so obviously took in conversing with Emily, a discovery which she made almost as soon as their colloquy had commenced, than, under the pretext of speaking to Squire Ringwood, who was at a little distance, she dragged him almost rudely away from the carriage, petulantly exclaiming, as they retreated, "How can you find any pleasure in talking to that poor, moping, mealy-faced girl, who speaks and looks just as if she were going to be hung to-morrow; a fate which there is good reason to suspect that her old miserly, half-crazy father richly deserves? You had better have nothing to do with either of them. The Manor-house is a horridly dull stupid place to visit at: wretched dinners, and

as rare as they are bad. They say the old man has fits, or walks in his sleep, or sees spectres and apparitions, or something of that sort, for he frequently alarms the servants with shrieks, and cries for help in the dead of night. There can be no doubt that there is madness in the family, and I have understood that Miss Welbeck has an occasional touch of it, which is probably the cause of her melancholy, unless it may proceed from her health, which I am told is shocking."

Before Henry could make any reply to these equally spiteful and groundless insinuations against Emily, they had reached Squire Ringwood, who had reluctantly quitted Fanny Frampton to superintend the commencement of the sports and the distribution of the prizes. Those for leaping, running, and throwing the quoit, had already been distributed without any unpleasant occurrence, when, in the wrestling-match that succeeded, a good deal of angry feeling was excited by the brutal conduct of Bat Haselgrove the Cartwright, whose prodigious strength had hitherto enabled him to

throw every adversary, and who, taking a malignant pleasure in rendering their falls as heavy as possible, by precipitating himself upon them, had so seriously injured one of his competitors, that he was obliged to be borne from the ground. Unmanliness and want of generosity, whether in peer or peasant, never failing to rouse Henry's instant indignation, he gave Mrs. Penguin in charge to one of her friends, threw off his coat, and prepared to enter the lists, an intention which was no sooner perceived by his companion, then she besought him, by the appellation of "her dear Henry," not to engage in so unequal a contest, or expose himself to the ferocity of such a relentless antagonist as the herculean wheelwright. "Madam," said Henry, in a tone of calm decision, "I do not consider the contest unequal, since success in these encounters does not by any means depend upon strength; there is, therefore, no danger: but if there were, I could not now recede with honour; consequently, there is no possible alternative that will enable me to comply with your wishes:" and gently disengaging himself, for

she had seized hold of his arm, he advanced towards the ring. Even the villagers, who mostly hated the bullying cartwright, and would have been delighted to see his pride humbled, endeavoured to dissuade Henry from what they considered a desperate and hopeless struggle. "Lord love ye, young master!" cried several, "don't think of trying a fall wi' he. Heart alive! thee bee'st a lissome chap, but he be a heap too heavy for thee, he be indeed now!" These exhortations were thrown away upon the object of their friendly solicitude, who planted his foot for the contest with an undismayed aspect, while all eyes were bent upon the combatants, as the crowd pressed around them with an almost breathless curiosity.

"Why, what kind of a hobbledehoy bee'st thee?" cried the cartwright, eying his opponent with a scowl of contemptuous triumph. "Do'st want same sauce I gave just now to Ned Hicks? Well, thee shall ha' it then!" with which words he sprang forward to the onset.

Henry had been a practised wrestler in America, where all the manœuvres and science of

the game are much better understood than in England, so that his superior skill rendered him more than a match for an adversary who possessed little beyond physical strength, and who was already out of breath from his previous contests. Eluding all his attempts to close with or throw him, Henry suffered him to exhaust himself by unavailing efforts, and then seizing his opportunity, grappled his sinewy opponent, and by a dexterous twist threw him almost instantly to the ground, not relinquishing his hold, but rather letting him down than hurling him to the earth, in order that he might receive the least possible detriment from the fall. The exulting shout that burst from the assemblage only inflaming the rage of the baffled cartwright, he quickly sprang upon his legs, and with savage, vengeful looks, and muttered execrations, eagerly renewed the contest. This struggle was much shorter than the previous one, for passion having thrown the peasant completely off his guard, Henry, with a rapidity that to the bystanders seemed to be almost magical, threw him a second time to the

ground, guarding him from injury with the same careful tenderness as before. These two falls in succession having decided the victory, Ringwood came forward to deliver the prize, which consisted of a small sum of money.—“My good friend,” said Henry, holding out his hand to the vanquished man as soon as the subsidence of the deafening plaudits allowed him to be heard—“I became your competitor in this noble game, in order to prove to you that it is possible to conquer an adversary, and yet conduct yourself towards him with forbearance and humanity. When I find that you practice the lesson you have received, I will gladly give you out of my own pocket the amount of the prize you have now lost. In the mean time, as the poor fellow whom you so unnecessarily injured, will probably not be able to work for several days, I will beg Mr. Ringwood to pay over the prize to Ned Hicks.”

This instance of generosity drew forth new and more clamorous applauses, in the midst of which the vanquished wheelwright retreated homewards, swearing that he had been beaten

by trickery, not by honest wrestling; and that it was not a fair match, since he had been blown when he began the last set-to. A portion of the villagers now betook themselves to Ringwood's-Green, a part of the heath so called because the Squire had cleared and levelled it at his own expense for the use of the cricket-playing public; while Henry, reclaiming his coat, returned to Mrs. Penguin, whose admiration was exalted to the highest pitch by the bravery and magnanimity he had displayed in the recent encounter. That lady was now in all her glory: placing her arm within that of the champion, she paraded him up and down the thickest of the fair, under the pretext of searching for one of her friends; and, as the victor became a conspicuous object of attention, she had the supreme delight of hearing her own name buzzed about, sometimes accompanied by admiration of her handsome figure, as well as of the resplendent pelisse and feather-flaunting hat in which she had made herself glorious. This was to her a sort of living apotheosis, and her looks testified the triumphant beatitude of

her heart. They assumed a still more haughty exultation as she sailed with stately port before the carriage of Lady Susan Frampton ; nor was it without an additional gratification that, upon turning her jealous eye to the spot where Welbeck's vehicle had been stationed, she discovered that it had been driven from the ground.

While they were thus traversing the rows of booths, their ears were suddenly startled by a clamorous hubbub, and shouts of " A thief ! a thief ! duck him ! duck him ! to the horse-pond with the rascal !" and upon turning their eyes in the direction of the noise, they beheld an angry mob hauling forwards and vituperating a figure, whose features, and the upper part of his dress, were rendered undistinguishable by their being daubed all over with flour. By the wallet and hammer, however, and still more unequivocally by his voice, as he vehemently protested his innocence, and shouted out his name and residence, Mrs. Penguin recognized her husband. The luckless geologist, in pursuance of his stated intention, had set out to visit

Hordle Cliff, but as he caught a view of the numerous carriages, horsemen, and pedestrians assembled at the fair, he was seized with an invincible curiosity to witness the proceedings, and eagerly turned his steps towards the scene of action. For some time he prowled about the outskirts, apprehensive of encountering his wife, and not wishing to afford her any plea for the exercise of her affectionate authority before so many witnesses. But his prying, curious disposition tempted him, by degrees, among the rows of booths, when, to his no small dismay, he saw Henry and his spouse coming towards him, and became instantly aware, that unless he could make a precipitate retreat, he would be visited by an angry and public reprimand from the latter. Seeing no other alternative in this emergency, he darted behind one of the booths, lifted up the canvass at the back, and crept under it, intending to remain ensconced until his wife had passed, and then to make his escape from the fair. In this process he unfortunately upset a large bowl of flour, which had been placed upon a shelf above his head : it happened that

this and several of the adjoining stalls had been plundered of various articles by some undetected pilferer; the noise of the falling bowl brought the owner to the spot, and as the felonious mode of stealing into his booth, as well as the shabby fustian dress, seal-skin cap, convenient wallet, and bewildered looks of the intruder, left no doubt in his mind that he was the identical delinquent who had already been committing depredations on his property, he collared him without ceremony, roaring lustily to his neighbours to come and secure the thief. The adjoining booth-keepers, none of whom knew Penguin personally, as they came from a different part of the county, willingly lent a hand to punish one whom they supposed to be their common enemy, and the whole irritated and indignant assemblage were dragging their victim towards the horsepond, when they were encountered by Henry and Mrs. Penguin.

“What new scrape has he got into?” exclaimed the latter, as soon as she recognised her husband; “and why has the prying old fool

presumed to come to the fair, when I ordered him not? Let them duck him in the horse-pond, it will serve him quite right, and cure him, perhaps, of these vagaries." Henry was not a little astonished at hearing such language from the "fond, faithful creature, and truly attached wife," who had so lately declared that she should inevitably expire upon the spot, were she to see her husband in any danger; but without waiting to inquire the cause of this most startling inconsistency, he sprung forward to the rescue of his friend. Perhaps no other individual could have saved the luckless geologist from a process which would have effectually washed the flour from his features, for the conqueror of Bat Haselgrove had obtained a moral influence which presently procured him a hearing, and a critical delay of five minutes sufficed to bring forward scores of witnesses, not only to establish Penguin's identity, but to express their conviction of his innocence. He himself, not choosing to confess his real motive, declared that he had popped under the canvass simply out of

fun and frolic, as he had always been a bit of a wag. Several of the villagers deposed in his behalf, that there was no harm whatever in him, though they had always considered him a little bit cracky ; since he had once driven his chaise slap into the deepest part of Avonwater Bottom, and was in the habit of maundering about the country in that shabby dress, grubbing up stones, shells, rubbish, and what not, which he popped into his wallet. The contents of his bag confirming this statement, there was no longer any difficulty in effecting his liberation, when Henry withdrew him from the mob, whose previous animosity was now converted into a compassionate sort of laughter at his grotesque figure, rueful looks, and the ludicrous nature of his mischance. Mrs. Penguin, who presently joined them, would have lost no time in rebuking her disobedient husband, but Henry was spared the pain of hearing her tender remonstrances, for at this juncture a neighbouring tradesman driving up in his taxed-cart, offered to take them both home, a proposition which

was gladly accepted. Henry helped them into the vehicle, bade them adieu, returned to the George at Thaxted, and on the following morning set off for London, for the purpose of bringing back his mother on her promised visit to Grotto-house.

CHAPTER VII.

Noblemen, and Members of Parliament, have large cellars full of sealed bottles, to enable them the better to endure the wretchedness of life. The poor man seeks the same end by expending three-halfpence in gin ;—but no moralist can endure the idea of gin.

REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

MANY a man who has predicted mischief or misery from an approaching event, would much rather that the evil should occur, than that his sinister prognostications should be falsified, to the impeachment of his judgment and foresight. Rochefoucauld's misanthropical maxim, that there is something in the misfortunes, even of our best friends, not altogether displeasing to us, may perhaps be partially

true, where we have foretold the calamity, and in vain dissuaded the sufferer from the course that has produced it; for our self-love is generally so much stronger than the love of others, that we secretly enjoy the fulfilment of our auguries, in spite of the mischief it may have entailed upon our neighbours. It is recorded of some nice-calculating croaker, that he always prophesied failure and disappointment in whatever he undertook, as a hedge to his feelings, the gratification being the greater if he succeeded, contrary to his expectations; and the pain of having his forebodings realised, being considerably alleviated by the pleasure arising from a sense of his own prophetic acuteness. If there be any complacency in seeing our predictions accomplished, even at the expense of our friends, there must be a double annoyance where we have prophesied trouble and confusion to our adversaries, and the event has proved totally contrary to all our ominous prognostications.

Such was the unhappy plight of the suppressionists. They had prefigured the opening

of Pandora's box. They had anticipated, as the sure consequences of the fair, drunkenness, confusion, riot, and bloodshed; but the more confidently they had called these spirits from the vasty deep of popular enjoyment, the less did they seem disposed to obey the summons, although provocation to break the peace had not been wanting in the overbearing insolence of some of the extra-constables sworn in to preserve it. In this dearth of grave delinquency, it only remained to make the most of such trifling misdemeanours as had actually occurred, and loudly to declare that they would have been of a much more heinous nature, but for the admirable arrangements made to preserve order. To predict what would have happened under a supposed contingency, is the safest of all vaticinations, since it is unsusceptible either of proof or refutation. In point of fact, not a solitary instance of assault or disturbance could be established, except the momentary scuffle occasioned by the suspicious conduct of Penguin, himself an active suppressionist; but several of the rustics, who had

made too free with strong ale or more potent distillations, at the George or the Cricketers, had been consigned to the cage during the night, and were brought up on the following morning before Justice Frampton to be fined for drunkenness.

That the magistrate was warranted in enforcing the full legal penalty for this offence, we do not mean to deny ; but we question the consistency of the angry reprimand that accompanied the infliction, coming, as it did, from one whose gouty foot, the result of his own deep and daily potations, might have taught him forbearance towards a failing in others, which he had never been able to correct in himself. Nor can we by any means subscribe to his doctrine, when he declared that the vice of drunkenness was particularly reprehensible in the poor.

Measuring the extent of moral turpitude by the temptations to commit an offence, and the degree of knowledge and instruction that might be expected to prevent its commission, we should say, that few delinquencies can be more venial, than the occasional ebriety of an ignorant poor

man; of one who turns, perhaps, from a cold, cheerless, miserable home, to the warm, comfortable, social jollity of an ale-house fire-side, and who, being assailed at once by moral and physical temptations, cannot resist an indulgence which exhilarates his mind by cheerful fellowship, relieves him from the present annoyances of cold, thirst, and hunger, banishes the recollection of all his past misery, and soothes every anxiety about the future. In this state, which the wretched may well deem their beatitude, the transgressor is often turned out of the tap-room into the streets; his intoxication, perhaps a first or very rare offence, furnishing a plea to some passing moralist for inveighing against the profligacy of the lower orders; while the rich drunkard, infinitely less excusable because more enlightened, and unassailed by the same allurements to excess, is borne to bed by his servants, or sent home in a carriage; and because his bestiality is not obtruded upon the general eye, he shall not only pass for a marvellous proper gentleman, but feel himself warranted in stigmatizing and punishing the poor offender as a

profligate wretch, and an outrager of public decorum.

No sooner had our scandalized magistrate—himself a two-bottle man—vented his indignation, and imposed his fines upon his fellow-culprits of the rabblement, than he gave audience to Mr. Tyson, the village apothecary, a *bon-vivant* and tippler, who took every body's draughts but his own, and contrived to make his Esculapian art minister to his epicurism, by recommending to his patients such good things as his own palate preferred, and then calling about half an hour before dinner, when he was tolerably sure of being invited to stay and partake of them. By this ingenious device he could scarcely fail to make both ends meet; for, if his patients became worse, as was not unfrequently the case, and were obliged to discontinue their generous regimen, he poured in an additional quantity of drugs to remedy his own mistake; if, on the contrary, it agreed with them, he urged its continuance, and became a still more frequent guest; so that, in the former alternative, he filled his purse, and in the latter

his stomach. Fame having blazoned through the village Frampton's intended turtle feast, Tyson called to suggest the propriety of his taking a preparatory mixture on the day of its occurrence ; observing, that although turtle in itself was a lighter and more digestible food than any of the testaceous or crustaceous tribe, it was generally amalgamated before it came to table with so many rich and pungent condiments, that the biliary ducts were apt to be disordered, and the chyle obstructed during the process of concoction. Frampton swallowed the bait, and the considerate apothecary was invited to swallow his portion of the turtle, generally no mean one. Indeed, he had lately been a frequent diner at the Hall, having undertaken to keep up a good understanding between Frampton's digestive organs, the gout, and two bottles of Madeira per diem : a treaty of amity which he endeavoured to perpetuate, by producing a magical pill, which the patient took at the conclusion of the first decanter, and then began a new account with the bile, by attacking the second bottle.

For the disciple of Esculapius this was a ca-

pital arrangement, since he got a handsome dinner for nothing, and made, moreover, a daily charge for the pill.

Mr. Tyson having taken his departure to circulate through the village with an air of *nonchalance*, but a feeling of real triumph, the fact, that he had been invited to the great man's feast, Mr. Frampton ascended into the drawing-room, where he found Doctor and Miss Dotterel, the former having called to talk over the occurrences of the fair with his brother suppressionist, and to aggravate as much as possible the peccadilloes of the poor, which he condemned verbally with considerable asperity, although he never had the heart to punish any of the delinquents who were brought before him for such petty misdemeanours.

"My good Sir," he exclaimed, "the iniquity and profaneness of the lower orders, and, in fact, their bad conduct, is every day becoming worse and worse—ahem!—yes, Sir, I maintain that it has now attained a height that is altogether—aha!—an opinion in which I am quite sure that both yourself and Lady Susan will

agree with me ; and moreover, that it is solely attributable to the scandalous diffusion of education, and the march of intellect, as it is most irreligiously termed—yes, Sir, I repeat irreligiously termed ! For what is it but a wicked and daring innovation upon the wisdom of our ancestors ? Why, Sir, what had been always called the genitive and accusative cases for many ages, must now, forsooth, be nick-named the possessive and the objective ; and the most dangerous heresies have been broached as to the use of the subjunctive mood. This, Sir, may at first appear—ahem !—trifling, but it leads the rising generation to despise the wisdom of their ancestors—yes, Sir, of our ancestors and the good old times. Teach the young idea how to shoot indeed !—Sir, it will teach them how to shoot us through the head, to lay the axe—ahem !—to the root of all our venerable institutions ; and moreover, as I am sure you will admit, to undermine all our invaluable—ahem ! Does not my reflection strike you in the same light, Lady Susan ?”

“ I cannot say that I exactly caught either

the light or the reflection," replied her Ladyship, who generally treated the doctor with a bantering contempt; "but I have no hesitation in saying, that if all classes are to be educated alike, I cannot understand how the upper orders are to preserve their superiority."

"Surely, Lady Susan, there can be no danger of that sort," cried her husband, "since they will always retain the great moral distinctions of wealth, and rank, and birth, and freedom from labour, together with all the offices of profit and power, whether in church or state, which constitute the only pre-eminence worth contending for."

"And on that very account the rabblement would like to have a fight for them, especially if we put arms in their hands, as we are certainly now doing, if it be true, that knowledge is power."

"Very true, vastly true!" ejaculated the Doctor: "I declare that observation is absolutely—ahem!—in fact, utterly—aha!—and I am sure, my good friend, must have wrought conviction in your mind. Shocking doings in the

fair, I hear! We foresaw it all. This is the march of intellect, I suppose, to wallow in luxury and—gluttony—yes, Sir, luxury and gluttony. By the by, I am glad to hear that the first batch of your East India Madeira is arrived at the Hall, and that the turtle is a fat and lively one. Ha! I must reserve myself for Friday. They tell me poor Mr. Penguin was nearly killed by the mob, merely because he was one of the suppressionists. Horrid! horrid! indeed worse than horrid,—absolutely improper; but we foretold it all.”

In this strain of vituperation of the lower orders, mingled with occasional episodes about Madeira, and digressions upon the best mode of dressing turtle, our brother suppressionists continued their colloquy, while Miss Dotterel, having by this time rustled her silk gown more than once as a substitute for conversation, or rather, perhaps, because she did not know what to do with her hands; having, moreover, with her forefinger and thumb, taken her usual pinches of petticoat, and brought it forward so as to shroud her thick ankles, looking all the while

half-sheepish and half demure; and having in vain waited for any observation from Lady Susan, at length poured forth a stream of her own peculiar gossipry, as if determined to escape for some time to come from the awkwardness of silence. “ Oh, my dear Lady Susan! I am *so* glad the fair passed off without mischief, for I made sure there would be bloodshed, after that awful intimation that I received the day before.—Ah! I forgot, I never told you, though I meant to come over to the Hall on purpose. We were sitting in the breakfast-parlour about one o’clock—the Doctor, who had eaten very heartily of chine at breakfast, had taken but an indifferent luncheon, poor dear man! and was just asking what there was for dinner, and how we should make up a rubber at night—when all of a sudden, without my being in the least degree prepared for it, what *do* you think happened?—Ah! you will never guess! I was seized with a bleeding at the nose! Now, for many years, my dear Lady Susan, I have always taken this as a solemn, prophetic warning of some impending cala-

mity, for it has invariably been followed by bloodshed."

"Accompanied, you mean," said her Ladyship, in a dry contemptuous tone.

"No, I don't mean accompanied, but followed; and this has ever been the case since that dreadful occurrence—I *must* tell you the heart-rending story—I have long wished to do so, and the time is at length arrived." Here her voice dropped into a solemn confidential whisper: "Poor dear Major Ogilvie, who is now dead and gone—heigho!—had long been showing me very marked attentions, in fact, paying me his addresses, though he had never made his declaration; when one morning, after having sung me a song of Farinelli's, the music I believe was Gluck's,—ah! you *should* have heard the Major, he *was* a sweet singer!—well, the Doctor had gone out to buy a new invented fish-sauce,—poor dear man! he *does* like to have his fish well-dressed,—and I remember he took Fanchette, my little beauty of a spaniel, with him, so that the Major and I were all alone in the breakfast-parlour, when looking beseech-

ingly in my face, he suddenly went down upon one knee before me—ah! there *was* gallantry in those days!—and taking my hand, which he tenderly pressed, made a passionate avowal of his love! I felt myself blushing, crimson deep, when at this agitating moment, just as I was about to utter a palpitating confession of my partiality, my eyes began to twinkle, I felt a tingling at my nose, my mouth opened in spite of myself, and I sneezed, like an explosion of gunpowder, full in his upturned and imploring face! Now tell me, Lady Susan, you who know how tremendously I always sneeze, did you *ever*? Of *all* the awkward occurrences!—The Major started, as, indeed, well he might, but presently recovered himself, so did I; he gazed at me tenderly, and I was just about to relieve him from his suspense, when I sneezed with a second, and still louder explosion, that seemed to shatter the very nose from my face. That *was* a concussion!—Still pressing my imprisoned hand, but looking downwards, as if to avoid the shower-bath that I was so unintentionally scattering around me, he swore that he would

never rise from his posture until I had pronounced his doom. I uttered a heartfelt sigh, and the soft avowal of mutual love was just trembling upon the tip of my tongue, when I felt something just trembling upon the tip of my nose!—Lady Susan, Lady Susan! it was beginning to bleed! did you *ever*? Of *all* the distressing moments!—I struggled to withdraw my hand that I might get my handkerchief, an action which the Major attributed to my coyness, and therefore did but grasp it the more firmly. In this contest, after I had frightfully spotted my tabbinet silk gown, three blood-drops of an unusually large size fell upon the Major's wrist! He started up in an agony; I closed my eyes and sunk into a chair overwhelmed with confusion. Imagining I had fainted, the Major hastily seized a large tumbler of water which stood on a side-table, and threw it in my face. At such an unexpected sousing, I screamed with surprise and terror; the Marechal powder which I then wore,—(I was always famous for my powder)—mingling with the water and the blood, converted my face

into a hideous spectacle, the door[^] flew open, the faithful Fanchette, thinking her mistress had been slain, flew at the poor dear Major, and bit a large mouthful out of his left leg, while the transfixed and horror-stricken Doctor suffered the bottle of newly-discovered fish-sauce to fall from his hand, and be smashed to pieces upon the floor!—My dearest Lady Susan! consider what must have been my feelings! did you *ever*? It was altogether a scene for a tragedy.”

“Rather for a farce,” said her Ladyship, without altering a muscle of her countenance.

“The poor dear Major!” resumed the spinster, “after I had subsequently accepted him, went to Edinburgh to arrange affairs for our marriage, caught an infectious fever, and I never saw him more!—Heigho! it *was* a trial, now wasn’t it? Several suitors would have succeeded to his place in my affections, but since that fatal occurrence I have never been able to listen, for a single moment, to the addresses of any man.”

“Except those of Pompey the Black,” said

Lady Susan, who, though she had always smiles and the most winning suavity at command for those whom she hated or feared, was generally serious with those whom she despised, and therefore preserved a perfect gravity upon the present occasion, notwithstanding the bantering strain of her observations.

“ Oh, the horrid creature !” cried Miss Dotterel ; “ don’t mention him ; I have thought a hundred times since that I could still feel his odious black fingers chucking me under the chin ; I wonder he didn’t make my nose bleed. But certain it is, that an accident of that nature has never happened, since the poor dear Major’s death, without being followed by some shocking catastrophe ; and though nothing of the sort has occurred at the fair, it is sure to come ; and who knows, my dear Lady Susan, but that it may happen in this very house ?—*I have* had my misgivings ; I thought of it in the middle of the night, it *has* made me very unhappy, and I determined to give you a solemn warning on the subject. For your own sake, for Mr. Frampton’s sake, for the sake of your family,

for the sake of all your friends, I do implore you to be careful, my dearest Lady Susan, about your mushrooms ! This is the season for pickling them, there are many of the poisonous sorts in the fields ; I once knew three people who were killed by eating them, and that happened after a bleeding of my nose. *It was* a shocking case ! almost as bad as that horrid affair of the family at Salt Hill, who were all poisoned by a dish of eels stewed in a copper saucepan. I hope, my dear friend, you look to your stewpans now and then ; I examine ours every month with my own eyes."

" Dorothy ! Dorothy !" cried the Doctor, who, while he was eagerly contending that the underside of a turbot was the best, had caught his sister's concluding observation, " How can you talk so gravely upon such uninteresting subjects—yes, subjects—ahem ! Who but you would think of tattling about saucepans ?"

" Why, brother, I have often heard you talk before company about sauces."

" Ay, Dorothy, but that's a very different—ahem !—in fact, quite another—aha !"

“ I am sure, brother, I would rather have swallowed a saucepan, even with the tinning off, than say any thing that you dislike.” The spinster looked at the party addressed with an affectionate smile, crossed her hands before her, and remained silent, but without one particle of acrimonious feeling, which was utterly foreign to her temperament, as it was, indeed, to her brother’s, who often talked illiberally and rebukingly, but seldom cherished a moment’s anger against any human being. “ I fear, Lady Susan,” he continued, “ you must be tired of listening to these culinary details.”

“ You are mistaken, Doctor; that is a sensation I can never experience, for I never listen when I cease to feel any interest in the conversation.”

A turn was happily given to the conversation by the well-timed entrance of Augusta and Fanny, the former attired with her usual scrupulous adherence to the minutiae of fashion, and preserving her customary stiffness of regulated demeanour; a combination which, notwithstanding her superior beauty, would, by

most observers, have been deemed less attractive than the easy elegance and unrestrained cordiality of Fanny. As the sun was not shining so as to create too searching a light, Miss Frampton ventured to place herself opposite to the window, making such a display of her well-turned ankle upon an ottoman, that Miss Dotterel, always horrified at this indecorum, took an extra-sized pinch of her own petticoats, and brought them so forward as completely to envelope both her splay feet. The practical rebuke was unnoticed by the party for whom it was intended; and as Fanny immediately began to express, with her habitual vivacity, the delight she had found in the sports and pastimes of the fair, the good-humour of the whole party appeared to be effectually re-established. It was not, however, to remain altogether unruffled; she who had restored harmony being destined to give it a momentary interruption. Miss Frampton, after having sharply reprimanded her sister's vulgarity in enjoying such a scene as the fair, and particularly her childish glee while gazing at the fooleries of Punch and Judy,

observed that *Farmer* Ringwood, as she contemptuously termed him, must be a low fellow, to mingle in the clownish games and amusements of the mob. Fanny was in general too volatile to be ever out of humour; accustomed to taunt and ridicule, they awakened no resentment in her bosom; but though she could bear them when levelled at herself, there was one other person, as it now for the first time appeared, to the rude and unjust censure of whom she could nor listen with patience even for a single moment. Her sportive looks and tones suddenly deserted her, her bosom swelled, and the colour mounted to her very forehead, as, turning her angry eyes towards her sister, she exclaimed, “No, Augusta, Squire Ringwood—for he is no more a farmer than you are—is *not* a low fellow. Instead of being dressed like the effeminate fops and dandies of Bond-street, he may choose to wear the plain, manly garb of an English country gentleman—*that* does not make him a low fellow! Instead of keeping himself aloof with a supercilious pride from his tenants and poorer neighbours, and being detested for his self-pu-

nishing arrogance, he may condescend to supply their wants, and promote all their harmless recreations, until he is respected and beloved by the whole village—*that* does not make him a low fellow ! He may not be so opulent, indeed, as some of his neighbours, but as his present comparative poverty proceeds from a high principle of honour—*that* cannot make him a low fellow !” Hitherto she had run on with the ready eloquence of deep indignation, but as this subsided, she began to recollect that she had been somewhat too vehement in Ringwood’s defence ; and with that quick subtilty which sometimes springs even from the pureness of female modesty, she endeavoured to hoodwink her auditors by continuing rapidly, though in a much calmer tone, “ You shall never persuade me, Augusta, that Mr. Melcomb and Mr. Ringwood can be low fellows for endeavouring to amuse the poor villagers yesterday. I know but little of either ; indeed I hardly ever saw Mr. Melcomb before, but I could not sit still and hear him abused, especially as I have been informed he is an American, and cannot be supposed, therefore, to

understand our customs and manners so well as a native."

Lady Susan, into whose contemplation it never entered that any daughter of her's could love a poor man, and who consequently never suspected the cause of Fanny's vehemence, contented herself with exclaiming, "Hey-day, child! what can be the matter with you? You have never treated us before with such a burst of petulance, and when you feel any tendency towards a recurrence of it, I must beg that you will immediately walk up into your own room."

Augusta, who, from several little circumstances, had pretty accurately divined the real state of her sister's feelings, said, in the malicious hope of drawing attention to her inconsistency, "Truly, Fanny, I can hardly understand your meaning. You begin with a passionate defence of Mister Ringwood—since you will not allow me to call him farmer—and end with a vindication of Mr. Melcomb, whose name had never been mentioned."

"His conduct has been exactly similar, and

he was, therefore, equally liable to your injurious imputation," replied Fanny, endeavouring to appear again composed, and shaking the ringlets over her face to hide her returning blushes.

"There is this difference, Fanny, between the two cases," said Mr. Frampton, "and it is a very essential one. When a rich man steps down in this way from his sphere, it is evidently a temporary condescension, which his circumstances will never allow to become a permanent one. It is a freak, a vagary, and, in my opinion, a very silly one; but wealth must be allowed its privileges, even of eccentricity, or there would be no advantage in being opulent. When a poor man, however, puts off his gentility, it gives reason to apprehend that he is not condescending, but finding his proper level; and that he will acquire an habitual taste for those sports and associates, which are the only ones within the reach of his penury."

"There! There!" ejaculated the Doctor, "that is an observation which I call altogether

—ahem!—in fact, absolutely—aha! Do not you, Lady Susan?”

“It can be designated by no other term,” said her ladyship, slightly bowing her head, and speaking in a tone of dry contempt.—Fanny was not in the smallest degree converted from her own opinion, although the whole room was opposed to her, but having now recovered her self-possession, she was too prudent to prosecute the defence of Ringwood. Beginning already to suspect the nature of her own feelings towards him, and having a secret misgiving that her sister, whose malicious taunts she dreaded, had made a similar discovery, she became eager to turn the conversation, and to avoid all scrutiny, for she had not yet entirely recovered from her confusion. With that quickness of resource in which the most artless woman is seldom deficient, she ran, therefore, to the window, and seeing a cart approaching the house, expressed her opinion that it was bringing the remainder of the East India Madeira which her father was expecting. The device succeeded to ad-

miration ; Frampton hastily wheeled his gouty chair to the window, the doctor put on his spectacles and threw up the sash, the two entered into an eager debate, as to whether it was the Madeira or not, and, in the midst of the moving and discussion, Fanny stole unperceived out of the room.

CHAPTER VIII.

Thy words are daggers—spare them then. Alas
How short is woman's triumph o'er herself !
A brief uncertain time she may o'erpass
Her sex's limits—for a while may soar
To realms beyond her nature ; but full soon
She sinks in weakness down—as I do now !

G. F. RICHARDSON.

MRS. PENGUIN, whose admiration of Henry had rapidly increased at every fresh interview, and who anticipated no small share of *éclat* and reflected celebrity from his being domiciliated at Grotto-house, trumpeted forth his merits in every quarter, and found many a gossip ready to exaggerate her own hyperboles. Anxious, more especially, to bestow upon him that species of distinction to which she herself attached the most importance, she magnified his supposed wealth, and each hearer made liberal addita-

ments, until, in a short time, and upon no other basis than Henry's own simple statement that he was in independent circumstances, his fortune was bruited abroad as something unprecedented and prodigious. Great riches, in the possession of a generous, handsome young bachelor, exercise a sort of magical influence, which few have philosophy enough to resist—especially if they be of the female sex. Wealth, which its possessor has accumulated by the labour of a long life, not seldom accompanied by the sacrifice of health and character, instead of making any very powerful appeal to our respect, rather strikes us by its insufficiency, when we see it thus associated with decrepitude and disrepute. But the opulence to which the young, joyous and comely, have succeeded, without the toil or responsibility of its acquirement, seems to be a potent and delicious enchantment, encircling the head of its owner with a halo of enduring happiness, and throwing a cheerful light upon the hearts of all those who come within its gladdening influence. Many a vision of gaiety and glory; of equipages, ser-

vants, and opera-boxes; of dress, diamonds, and fashionable parties; did the reputed fortune of Henry conjure up in the bosoms of the young ladies of Thaxted and its vicinity; while several provident mammas, who had hitherto been very negligent in their calls at Grotto-house, seized the very first opportunity of leaving cards, that they might thus make an early acquaintance with "the fortunate youth."—Lady Susan, Miss Frampton, Doctor and Miss Dotterel, with several other of the suppressionists, did indeed endeavour to convict him of vulgarity, on account of his disregard of modish attire, and his having mingled in the sports of the rustics; but their dissentient voices were presently drowned, and the question of his gentility was carried by acclamation. From such imputations there were many who would not altogether undertake to vindicate Ringwood; but that which might be lowering and reprehensible in the poor squire, became a generous disdain of foppery and fashion, a condescension tinged perhaps with a little eccentricity, but at all events a decided evidence of character and

genius in the young and opulent Henry Melcomb. A certain air of romance, moreover, attached itself to his rescue of the smuggler's daughter, at the risk of his own life, which, in the opinion of the young ladies, placed him in a still more exalted point of view, and in conjunction with his supposed wealth and personal recommendations, rendered him precisely that sort of hero which constituted their *beau ideal* of a desirable husband.

While he was thus an object of such warm panegyric with a portion of the better classes, he had achieved, in the few days of his residence at Thaxted, a not less marked popularity among the villagers and peasants. Old Nettle-top's nephew, instead of keeping his secret, had, in the warmth of his gratitude, divulged the whole extent of Henry's generosity—a circumstance which, together with his gallant and humane conduct at Hordle Cliff, his personal exploits at the fair, and his liberality towards his competitor, had made him a sort of prodigy in their eyes; especially when they beheld such conduct emanating from a man of great im-

puted opulence, and contrasted it with the arrogance and hauteur of some of the other rich residents in the same vicinity. Never, perhaps, had a favour so general and enthusiastic been obtained in so short a space of time.

There was another quarter, somewhat remote from the immediate scene of his actions, where he was held in still higher admiration, and his services recalled with a still more fervent gratitude. This was the Grange Farm, the residence of the smugglers, to which we must now conduct our readers. After the failure of the Captain's enterprize, as recorded in our third chapter, it will be recollected that George, whose broken leg prevented his immediate removal, had been left at a public-house by the sea-side. Fearing, however, that a warrant might be issued for his arrest, and shrinking with dismay from the thought of a public exposure, he insisted on being conveyed next night to the Farm, where there was more than one hiding-place that might defy discovery. This was accordingly done, though not without injury, as it subsequently appeared, to the

wounded leg. "My Lord," the traitorous confederate who, in the language of the smugglers, had "scamped, played booty, blown the bite," had never obtained the complete confidence of the Captain, which was the principal reason for his leaving him at home on the night when the Longsplice was to run her valuable cargo ashore. From a lurking distrust of his countenance—for the Captain was a shrewd physiognomist, he had also carefully concealed, during his short abode at the farm, the existence of the secret store; so that when the revenue officers presented themselves at the Grange, as they did shortly after the affray, those keen inquisitors could neither discover a single bale of smuggled goods, nor detect the smallest traces of the wounded inmate. Honest Rough-and-ready, who, during their search, had stood surveying them with his usual imperturbable phlegm, departed so far from his habitual taciturnity at its conclusion, as to exclaim with a sneering smile, and a slight jerk of his shoulder, "Why, lubbers! this is worse than

Jack Mason's haul, for he pulled up a congor-eel and a sea-hedgehog, but you have caught nothing to carry home upon your shoulders except what you brought with you, and that's a fool's head ! Harkee, you landsharks ! take care of yonder black dog, for his name's Belzebub ; and when every one has his own cargo aboard, I reckon you 'll be under the Devil's hatches, heh ! heh !"

"Start my timbers !" cried the Captain, taking the meerscham-pipe from his mouth, and affecting all the indignation of injured innocence, "is this the way an honest farmer's to be served ; to overhaul his lockers, and rummage him from stem to stern, as if he were sailing under false colours ? Gover'ment ought to have monkey's allowance, or a taste of the cat-o'-nine-tails, for treating old Blacklocks in this way, a'ter what I did for 'em during the war. But there's no gratitude stirring nowhere. Avast ! heave off ! shoot a-head, ye thick-skulled coves ! there's no grob here ; so bout ship and luff, I tell ye, for Belzebub begins to growl,

and if he clears deck for a set-to, and runs ye aboard, I wouldn't give a brass button for your sheathing, unless you're copper-bottomed !”

The huge black mastiff, apparently divining that their purposes were hostile, had indeed been dogging the heels of the visitants with half bristling mane, and a subdued snarl, casting an occasional look at his master, as if only awaiting a signal for attacking them ; so that the men, who by this time began to despair of making any discovery, were not sorry to leave the premises, and return to their station. No sooner had they quitted the farm, than the Captain, having previously planted the boy Moon at the Pigeon-house, to give notice should any of the officers return, hastened to the concealed room, where George was lying upon a truckle-bed, and told him, not without manifest exultation, how completely the land-sharks had been baffled ; adding, that according to the information of the officers, no other than search warrants had been issued, and that he might therefore consider himself safe from all danger of arrest. “ Not that I can tell,” he exclaimed,

“how the devil they could pop you into a warrant, unless they have learnt more about you than I have; for sink me, if I know or care what your name is besides George! You didn’t tell it to My Lord, did you?”

“Neither to him, nor to you, nor to any human being will I make the avowal,” replied the wounded man. “No, no, no!—that is a word which shall never pass my lips, for I will not bring ignominy upon the innocent. Let me endure the whole penalty of my own criminal career.”

“Shiver the Longsplice! what d’ye mean by that, George? A criminal’s a sneaking, skulking, cheating, lying, cowardly scoundrel! but your fellow of the free-trade is a bold, honest, well-hearted gentleman, who makes war upon the lubberly Customs and ’Cise—cause why?—they meddle first with him—but in every other respect, honours the king, and obeys the laws. I was thinking, George, afore I got up this morning, what a capital free-trader might have been made of that fine young chap that saved your life and Polly’s! They tell me he’s as

rich as a Jew. What a pity ! what a noble smuggler spoilt ! Bold as a lion, nimble and lissome as a greyhound ; swims, I warrant, like a fish, backs a horse as if he had been born in the saddle, and I dare say knows how to handle sail, oar, or rudder, as well as I do myself, that have been used to it from a boy."

" Happy, happy, Henry Melcomb !—for such I understand is his name," exclaimed George, " Oh ! may he never abuse the talents with which he is endowed, never sink to an occupation so humiliating as mine, never experience my present misery and remorse. For having so gallantly saved the life of Mary, he will be for ever entitled to your gratitude and to mine ; but upon myself he would have conferred a greater favour had he left me where I was—to perish and to be forgotten."

" Clew up your jawing tackle ! I know you 're a brave fellow, so don't talk like a snivelling milksop. Cheer up lad, cheer up, and never be faint-hearted, cause you 've met with a mishap. Start my timbers ! I 've known many a chap in better spirits when he had a bit of lead in him,

or a spliced bone, than when he hadn't—Jem Stokes, of Keyhaven, was one on 'em. Did you know Jem Stokes, the carpenter?—Poor fellow! the fishes had him last year; capsized in a squall off the Needles. 'Twas Jem first made the Longsplice what she is: true as ever I'm standing here this very minute! Tell you how it happened. He and I were on the beach together under Hurst Castle, and I fell a swearing to see the Polly—for she was called the Polly then—floundering about like a great lubberly Dutch galliot. 'Curse and sink that cross-grained tub!' said I; 'I've tried her both lugger-rigged, and cutter-rigged, and she won't sail no how, and what's more, she never *will* sail.'—'Not as she is now,' said Jem Stokes; 'but I know how to make her as fast a cutter as any 'twixt Falmouth and Spithead.'—'That's a lie!' said I, 'if ever you told one.'—'But it aint, though,' says he; 'only you put her into my hands; I'll cut her right in half, make her twelve feet longer, and if she don't sail then, I won't charge you a shilling for the job.'—'Done!' says I, for I couldn't lose by that bargain. Jem took and sawed her

right in half, made her twelve feet longer ; and sure enough, when we launched her again, she sailed like a fish, and nothing has ever come nigh her since ; and ever since that 'ere day I called her the Longsplice. Did you see t'other morning how she distanced the revenue-cutter ? Lord ! she could fly round her like a bird."

" I caught a glimpse of her as the sun rose," replied George, " but I was suffering too acutely to attend to her superior sailing."

" Well, now, I could lie and watch her by the hour together, even if I had half a dozen holes through me. To be sure, it's bad work to have a bone shivered, as I myself know, though it's the chance of war : but Lord ! we must all take our lot, come when and how it will ; and I have been as near death's door as you were, without ever losing a drop of blood. Tell you how it happened. Stood in the water—winter time too—up to the shoulders, running a crop of dry, under Hengistbury-head ; jumped upon black Bess to ride home through the forest ; began to rain at first, then froze bitterly all the rest of the night. In about an hour I was a sheet of

ice, frozen up, deaf, dumb, and blind as a marline spike. But black Bess warn't, and so she stopped at the Grange ; and out comes a fellow we called Prime-and-load—cause why ? he took snuff and tobacco. 'Hilloa !' cries Prime-and-load, 'here's the Capt'n come home dead as a door-nail !' And so I was, cold and stiff as a poker. So they took me off the mare, and laid me in an out-house, and one of our chaps went off to see about having a crowner's quest, lest any on 'em should get into trouble. But in less than half a pipe, honest Rough-and-ready comes in, 'Why,' says he, 'it aint a trifle 'll take the breath out of the Captain's body, so a'fore ever we have the quest, we 'll give him a fair chance and a good rolling.' Well, they rolled me backwards and forwards, for all the world like a barrel-churn, till I gave a groan and began to move, when they got me into a warm bed, poured some brandy down my throat, and so at last brought me about, and cheated death and the crowner too : but I was desperate bad, couldn't move hand or foot for a fortnight a'ter."

“And yet, to look at your figure, or to see you, as I have, hauling a loaded boat ashore, or carrying off four tubs at once, with the strength of a Hercules, one would think you had never known suffering or sickness.”

“Ay, but I have though, and a good share too,” replied the Captain; who not only loved to crack of his former exploits, but thought, in the present instance, that the recital might amuse and comfort his companion. “I’ve had worse bouts than that ’ere, when I was frozen up. Tell you one on ’em. Commanded a large Dutch schooner, with a rare crop, which we meant to run at Hastings. Got foreign papers on board, as if from Flushing to Bilboa, all right and regular. Brought-to off Dunkirk by a King’s ship—not till she had fired a couple of shot though.—‘Hallo! Lion Boul-derson,’ says the Lieutenant, for he happened to know me, and the King’s officers always called me Lion, or else Blacklocks—‘Hallo!’ says he, ‘are you turned Dutchman? Why didn’t you bring to? this looks queer. What ’s the rig?—where ’s your papers? Flushing to Bilboa,’

says he, looking woundy sharp at 'em; 'All right, all right. Now let 's see what water you've got aboard. What! only two days water! That won't do, no how; you must be bound for a shorter trip than Bilboa. What do you mean to drink when this is gone?'— 'Why,' says I, 'what 's that to you? Mayhap salt-water, and mayhap nothing at all.'—He shook his head—'cause why? he smelt a rat: but he couldn't stop me for all that, papers all right and regular. So that night it came on to blow a proper hurricane, south and sou'-west; blew us right up into the North Sea; couldn't make head for six days, and never saw a sail. So our water was presently all gone, and sure enough I never thought to suffer what I did for the want on't; for when I 'm ashore, and can get grog or punch, I never think of touching it. Lord! Lord! that was a bad bout; the worst I ever had, ten to one! Can't tell ye what we all suffered; but you go and ask honest Rough-and-ready, for he was one on us, and he took to salt-water, which made him worse; and much as we could do to prevent his throwing him-

self overboard. However, we fell in with a Dantzicker, got a supply, and run our whole crop a'ter all."

"Truly, Captain, I wonder that such dangers and sufferings never induced you to quit the free trade."

"Why lookye, George; as to danger, I reckon it's pretty much the same everywhere. There was Jack Clincher, now, that had tumbled about at sea, night and day, fair and foul, for twenty, ay, three-and-twenty years, was drowned t'other day in a shallow pond, down here by Crockford Water; and Ned Evans, of Needsore Point, Squinting Ned, as they called him, a regular free-trade man, after being all his life among the poppers and slashers, without ever a scratch, was shot dead by his own little boy, who pulled the trigger of his gun, not knowing she were loaded. So, you see, every bullet has its billet; and when a fellow's hour is come, it's no use dodging and diving. The stoutest heart that ever beat must strike its red flag one day or another; and the 'sweet little cherub that sits up aloft' on purpose to look

a'ter a fellow, must be put out of commission. Give us your hand, George? I'll stand by you to the last drop of my blood—'cause why?—you twice took the fire that was meant for me: but don't go to treat me so again, or else you and I shall fall out; we shall, upon my soul! That 'ere bit o' lead that cracked your leg ought to have been in me, by good rights; and I don't want no one to run away with any part of my share. Every dog his own doom, that 's my motto—'cause why?—fair play 's a jewel. However, I won't quarrel with you this time.—Lord! you look as white as a scuttle-fish, and as washy as a sea-dab!—Hilloa! Polly, girl, Polly! bear a hand with a cordial and some of the Doctor's-stuff, or else George will be swamped while he 's at anchor! I wouldn't have him slip his cable, and make for t'other world,—no, not for every farthing that I am worth in this!"

Although Mary's health had been rapidly and completely reinstated after her return to the Grange, her bosom had ever since been deeply agitated. That her father's recent enterprize

should have failed, and that he should thus be absolved from the pledge by which he had bound himself to retire from a mode of life which she contemplated with a daily increasing abhorrence, was one source of deep vexation, though of a less tender and poignant nature than that which arose from the state of her feelings with reference to George. Now that his present safety was secured, and his final recovery placed beyond all reasonable doubt, she could not revert to her conduct at Hordle Cliff, generous and even heroic as it had been, without a thrill of shame and humiliation at the thought that it might be attributed, by the sufferer himself, as well as by others, to her personal love of the individual. When she recalled his equivocating conduct, and more especially his unexplained interview with the strange lady in the forest, a rush of indignant jealousy made her recoil with additional aversion from the very idea of being subjected to any suspicion of this nature. Detesting in others whatever was opposed to the straightforward, bold integrity of her own purposes; impetuous and

high-spirited; offended at George's vacillating demeanour, yet feeling that her secret attachment, even in the midst of her angry emotions, was confirmed and softened by the sight of his sufferings, she could scarcely understand her own sensations, or prescribe to herself a line for her own conduct. In this conflict, pride so far gained the ascendancy over tenderness, that when George, in their first interview after his arrival at the farm, poured forth a passionate strain of gratitude, that might well be termed the eloquence of love, although it breathed not the name, Mary, assuming an air of cold reserve that was foreign to her heart, exclaimed, "I had requested, Sir, in our last conversation, that you would forbear this sort of fulsome language, which it becomes not you to use, nor me to hear, and I must now repeat the injunction. We are nothing more to one another than accidental inmates of the same house, and I desire that we may always converse as such. As to this occurrence at Hordle Cliff, you owe me no particular gratitude — none, whatever. I did not at first even know that it was you

whom I saw upon the rock ; and had it been any other, I should, from motives of common humanity, have acted in precisely the same manner. I had rode far and fast that night in search of my father ; I was over-fatigued, perhaps a little frightened, and I fainted away, as any other might have done under the same circumstances."

"Any other, indeed, might have fainted away," said George ; "but few others would have so nobly ventured their life to save mine. Do not, then, forbid me to express a gratitude which I can never cease to feel ; do not blame the irrepressible enthusiasm of a heart which feels ready to leap from my bosom whenever you approach. Gratitude, at least, is a blameless emotion, consider it as nothing more. My secret thoughts, my silently cherished wishes, may, indeed, point to a bliss as transporting as it is unattainable ; but if I ever dared to give direct utterance to any such impossible dreams, I should be a scoundrel indeed. No, Mary, I may have been foolish, mad, criminal towards others ; but so pure and holy have been the

emotions you have awakened in my bosom, that my heart would rather burst asunder than allow me to act dishonourably. Thus have I ever felt, into whatever passionate language my admiration may have sometimes betrayed me; and thus do I feel more intensely than ever, now that pain, solitude, and reflection, have brought me to a better sense of duty, and pointed out to me the course I ought to pursue. Believe me, Mary, you shall have no farther cause to complain of me."

"I am glad of it, and shall be still more so when I find that your conduct towards others is equally free from blame; when I know that solitude and reflection have not proved useless counsellors, but that you have determined to abandon for ever the lawless and disreputable occupation of a smuggler."

"Oh, my sweet and sage monitress! your friendly wishes are but the echo of my own heart. I believe this wound to have been a judgment for my misdeeds; I accept it as such: and in the silence, darkness, and remorse of the past night, I have solemnly pledged my

soul to renounce instantly and for ever my present mode of life."

"George! it is well and wisely resolved, and I should despise you for ever if you could flinch from so laudable a purpose. I thank you, I thank you a thousand times for your resolution; it has made my heart absolutely leap with pleasure, for it may perhaps induce my dear father to follow your example. Oh! if you could but accomplish this, the nearest and dearest object of my wishes, you would be remembered through the remainder of my life as my best and most valuable friend. I cannot tell you how happy I feel, even at the thought of so blessed a change."

"I should be the most ungrateful of wretches, did I not endeavour to gratify your desires, and I therefore pledge myself to use all my influence with the Captain. But he is as inflexible as he is brave, and has sworn to have the remainder of the Longsplice's cargo ashore. How soon this may be accomplished I know not, for she has been ordered back, for the present, to the opposite coast; and the increasing moon will

not allow any early repetition of the attempt. With this, however, I myself have nothing to do; for even did not my wound make me a prisoner, I have finally resolved never again to stir hand or foot in the free trade."

"These, at least, are glad tidings to me, and I may now, indeed, be proud of having contributed to save a life which will henceforth, I trust, be devoted to a happy and an honourable career."

"Happiness for me! Oh, never, never! Yes, indeed, there may be one solace for me in after times, when I shall, perhaps be far, far away from her who has infused this sweetening and redeeming drop into the bitter cup of my existence;—the word 'Mary' shall be to me hereafter as a fond and pleasant dream of memory, coming over me in lone places, in the deep dead of night, in sickness and in sorrow, soothing my troubled soul, and stilling the whispers of conscience with its silent music. Oh! what an angel minister of grace is virtuous woman! What love and sweetness are in all her ways! Surely, surely, my heart cannot have

altogether perished, my soul cannot have been utterly degraded, since it can entertain so pure and holy a reverence for Mary Boulderson."

"You are forgetting yourself, and falling into the language that I had forbidden," said Mary, blushing and confused, and yet not without a secret feeling of complacency at being made the object of an admiration so passionate and respectful.

"Forgive me, dearest Mary! pardon that epithet—my lips were unconscious of it, it escaped from my heart. Do not grudge me the only consolation I can know, either now or for the future. Alas! should I unfortunately live to be old, I shall never enjoy the pleasure of looking back upon a well-spent youth. I shall never taste that sole and true elixir of life, which, throwing off age and infirmity, rejuvenises the heart, and wafts it back into the sunshine, and flowery bloom and elastic joyousness of its first spring."

"Nay, nay, George, this is an unjust and gloomy view. Whatever may have been your early lapses, you will, at all events, have the

solace of reflecting that you did not persevere in evil courses, that you did not end your days as you had begun them, that you had the resolution to quit spontaneously your lawless course of life, and commence a new and better career."

"Oh, Mary! it does, indeed, require resolution, for it takes me from you. But it must, it shall be done!—ay, and quickly, before my heart fails. From this moment I am no longer one of your father's comrades, though I have not yet had the courage to tell him so. I have no right, therefore, to be protected beneath his roof, to share his hospitality, to deprive him of an abler and more willing partner. I will quit the Grange immediately."

"What! in your present deplorable plight? Impossible! quite impossible! You have already suffered by the removal from Hordle, and my father will never consent to your incurring any fresh danger."

"Mary, Mary! I am exposed to still greater danger while I remain here. You do not know me, or you would not urge me to continue beneath this roof. I am weak, unsteady, pliable,

infirm of purpose, and it is because I have learnt to distrust myself, that I have resolved to quit the Grange to-morrow."

"My father will never allow it—I will never allow it! 'Twere inhumanity to consent to it, even in a stranger; but to suffer it in you—you who have received your wound in protecting my dear father—how can you imagine that we could ever commit an act of such black ingratitude? See what a state you are in at this moment! your looks confess your utter helplessness. Take this cordial, George, it will restore you; and pr'ythee talk not; nay, now, do not even dream of quitting the Grange till you can better bear the removal."

At the sight of the patient's evident exhaustion, her voice softened into tenderness, while, as she presented the cordial to him, her hand shook, and there was an affectionate anxiety in her countenance that betrayed how deeply she was affected by his illness. "Besides," she continued, after a short pause, "whither would you go? You cannot be carried far without much

suffering and danger, and you will long, I fear, require surgical advice and attendance."

"I am deeply, gratefully sensible of your kindness, and the more tenderly I feel it, the more am I resolved upon leaving you. Nor need I travel far. Here in the forest, just beyond Boldre-wood-walk, I know of a sequestered cottage, in the vicinity of which I have a dear, valued, and most prudent friend, who will see me safely concealed, and take not less care for my recovery, than you could bestow upon me yourself."

A flash of jealous and indignant anger suddenly lighted up the face of Mary, as she reflected that the cottage mentioned must be the place of assignation where he had held his mysterious meeting with the strange lady; but her curiosity to develop this ambiguous affair overpowered, for the moment, every other feeling, and condescending even to employ *finesse* in the hope of drawing out some confession, she exclaimed, with an air of assumed indifference, "If the gentleman to whom you allude be so

careful a guardian as you describe him, he would never wish you to be moved in your present state."

"I did not allude to any gentleman," replied George, in some embarrassment, "but to one who is most near and dear to me; to a lady who—I cannot enter into particulars without compromising both my own safety and that which is ten times more precious to me—the happiness of the individual in question—but the day may perhaps arrive when I may be enabled to——"

"Nay, Sir," interposed Mary, with sparkling eyes and reddened face, "pray do not for a moment imagine that I have the smallest wish to know any thing about an affair which, I dare say, will little bear publicity. You are your own master, the properest judge of your own actions, the fittest chooser of your own friends, the best enabled to decide upon your own health. If you feel yourself well enough to quit the Grange, pray do so, as soon as it may please you. I am quite sure, that neither my father nor myself would wish to detain you

against your inclinations, not for a day—no, Sir, not for a single minute.”

Having thus spoken with an air and in a tone of constrained calmness, she quitted the room, and tried to sing to her guitar in an adjoining chamber, in order to prove her non-chalance; but her trembling voice failed her, she was obliged to desist, and had not pride and indignation supported her, she would have betrayed the disappointment of her heart in a burst of weeping.

CHAPTER IX.

O no ! for I would rather roam
In the humble walks of my cottage home,
I would not but hear my mother's voice !
I would not but bid her heart rejoice !
For all the mines of wealth that sleep
In the bottomless caves of the ocean deep.

G. F. RICHARDSON.

HENRY, in the meantime, arriving safe in London, proceeded immediately to join Mrs. Tenby, his step-mother, who being of a most parsimonious disposition, had taken mean lodgings in an obscure street leading out of Holborn, where the rapacity of the landlady, and the dishonest of her servants, soon put her to a much greater expense than if she had engaged handsome apartments in a more respectable quarter of the town. This miscalculating thrift

had often placed her in a similar predicament, but she had not the heart to amend it in any other way than by a jealous and incessant vigilance over the paltry details of housekeeping, which involved her in perpetual squabbles with all parties. Although Mrs. Tenby had now lost some portion of the personal comeliness which had won the heart of her late husband, she retained her full share of that provincial, not to say illiterate vulgarity which Henry had in vain endeavoured to correct, and which marked her at once for an uneducated Virginian. This defect was rendered still more conspicuous by a drawling nasal intonation, a pretty free use of the most homely American colloquialisms, and the singing sound imparted to her ordinary discourse by her invariably leaving off with a high note, instead of the customary low one of the English.

We have stated elsewhere, that notwithstanding her former cruelty to Henry, she had latterly, but more especially since he had so easily resigned his fortune in her favour, entertained for him a sort of compassionate attach-

ment, considering him, to use her own phraseology, as "little better than a naitral gump in all worldly concerns, and no more able to fight his own battles, than a cub in a bear-trap, or a squirrel in a rackoon's nest." On his own account, therefore, she was not sorry to see him back in London ; but more especially was she delighted, for her head and heart had been cyphering during the whole of his narrative, when he stated the hospitable reception he had experienced from Mark Penguin, the genteel style in which that personage lived, his independent circumstances, and the friendly invitation he had given them to become inmates of Grotto-house, until they could determine their plans, and find a fitting residence for themselves.

"What !" she exclaimed with an animated look, little in accordance with her drawling mode of speaking, "He didn't invite us for a week, or a fortnight, or a month, then, but asked us to turn in now, and not turn out till we are tired?"

"Not till we had suited ourselves with a

house, if we determined on settling in the neighbourhood," said Henry.

"Butternuts and codfish! that's prime—that's the prettiest bit of news, I reckon, I have picked up since I came to the Old Country. Why, the old badger's a warm one, I warrant, and lives like a pretty considerable somebody, or I'd lose a guess! Well, Henry, the best roof to be under is that which covers another man's house; and when once I seat myself down beneath his, I shan't turn out in a hurry; tell me on't, if I do! Sure none but a gowk will pay away hard dollars for rent, when he may live for nothing, like a squatter in a log-hut. What's the *vally* of his property, d'ye reckon? How many acres, and how many dollars do they fetch him in?—Got no children, say?—Joes to coppers he'll have none, for his brother, my first husband that was, never had any. Ah! I shall love him mighty bad, I rather guess. Well, as I'm alive, I long to be jogging, for I'm robbed and cheated here, upstairs and down-stairs, from Passamaquody to the Mississippi, as we say in Virginny—from

Currituck Sound to the Laurel Mountain, as they talk in Caroliny."

"The greater Mr. Penguin's kindness," said Henry, "the more ungenerous would it be in us to take advantage of it. An invitation does not imply domiciliation: but this was an invitation; we shall not be justified, therefore, in making a lengthened stay. A visit is not a permanent residence."

"There you go! chopping logic, as if you were cutting pitch knots for candles, and always taking the side that makes against yourself, or else 'twouldn't be you. Why, boy, the old one has no doubt got a power of dumps, and I'm sure you have little enough, so keep what you have, and live scot-free while you may; for 'gold makes gold,' as poor Richard says, 'and the more pence you can save, the more pounds you will have.'"

"You will oblige me very much, now that we are come to England," said Henry, "if you would drop poor Richard's sordid maxims, and speak the language of the country, instead of this Yankee dialect."

“ Rattlesnakes and ringums ! that ’s a good one ! I speak raal old ginooine Virginny, and that ’s better, I guess, than all the new-fangled rubbish that we shall hear in these parts. Raily, you progress at a strange rate. Sordid maxims, forsooth ! it would be better for you, if you would profit by them, instead of trampoosing about the country, as you did in America, attending to every body’s concerns but your own ; going out wool-gathering, and coming home shorn There ! that ’s into you, I reckon ! And pray, boy, when do you mean to set about some business or other for yourself ; for ’twould puzzle a Philadelphia lawyer to tell how you mean to live on a hundred a-year ? Snecks ! I wish you would recollect for once what poor Richard says, ‘ no gains without pains ; then help hands, for I have no lands.’ Didn’t I tell you over and over, when we were in the new settlement at Johnson’s Town, that if you went on spouting and planning, and attending committees for the good of others, you would never do any good for yourself ? Didn’t I remind you, that if

you would ‘ plough deep while sluggards sleep, you would have corn to sell and to keep !’ ”

“ You have never been remiss, I must confess, in inculcating any of poor Richard’s morality, such as it is, and yet I do not feel disposed to become his convert. I despise the selfish and debasing struggle for wealth that is instilled into us, as the primary lesson, and the most important law of life. Be satisfied, madam, with knowing, that while I am occupied, as I hope I shall constantly be, to the best of my ability, for the benefit of others, I cannot be idle ; and that while I am content with what I have, I cannot be poor.”

“ Only hear him ! Why, this beats all natur ! to think that a young man like you, spry and *active*, with a power of legs and arms, soople as a young catamountain, should think of doing nothing but stray-va-ging about all day like a great fat, lazy opossum. As I’m alive, one would think you had got Injun blood in ye. Pretty considerable tejus you’ll find such a life,

or I'd lose a guess. Rich enough with a sneaking hundred a-year ! But a quair notion, I reckon, for any one 's that 's not on the cracky order. Why, then, if you never mean to add more to it, you should take the greater care of what you have, and husband the few hundreds that was saved for you during your minority ; and ' take care of the pence, for a small leak will sink a great ship ; and always taking out of the meal-tub, and never putting in, soon comes to the bottom,' as poor Richard says."

" Have you any particular reason for harping on poor Richard at the present moment, or may I consider it as only a rehearsal of your established lecture?"

" Why, then, boy, I have a particular reason, and a pretty considerable handsome one, I conceit. Guess you 're in some danger of having the dollars in your pocket knocked down, faster 'n sixteen more 'll pick 'em up again. So look out, and stay to house, while we remain in London, or else you 'll buy the rabbit, that 's all."

“ To become intelligible you should avoid enigmas ; but you speak in nothing else, therefore you are not intelligible.”

“ So ! you have got to your syllogisms again, have you ? Snecks ! you give ’em a terrible good name, for they are mighty silly, sure enough. Guess you ’ll understand me presently. Recollect young Enoch Clayton ? him that came from Kentucky, or somewhere that way, right down east. I sha’n’t forget in a hurry how he used to drop in of a morning, when we were living in the back country, and never went away without a swig of warm cyder, some roasted apples, hasty-pudding and molasses, pumpkin-pie and sweet sarse, or whatever was going, and generally put his hand into the hickory-nut bag before he showed us his back.”

“ I have little recollection of all this, but I shall never forget his jumping into the lake after me when I fell overboard.”

“ The greater gowk he ! for you can swim like a cork, and was never in any more danger than an eel in a trout stream.”

“ Which, however, he did not know when he

so generously risked his own life to save mine. But what of my friend Enoch Clayton?"

"Why, that he has been such a gawkey, such a naitral, as to go security here in England for a Caroliny man, a Swapper, that he knew down east, who has left him in the lurch, and so master Enoch has found his way into the Fleet Prison, that's all. Met his sister, who told me a tarnal long story all about it, and cried a few, I reckon, before she had done it. I told her you were up country, and wouldn't come back to London; but if she finds you're here, joes to coppers, she'll beat up your quarters, and have a pull at your dollars to get brother Enoch out of limbo."

"I shall save her the trouble of finding me out, for I shall immediately go to visit my friend, whose misfortune I am truly sorry to learn."

"The old one! 'Tatoes and codfish! you're joking, surely."

"I never joke, nor if I did would this be an occasion for it."

"Torment us all! who ever heard the like of this? Guess you're mad. Why, boy, he'll

pepper your dish for you finely, won't leave you a Joe in your purse. Henry, I will never forgive you, if you go nigh him."

"I should be sorry for that, madam, nor can I believe that you would be so unjust; but as I should never forgive myself, were I to desert my friend in his hour of need, I shall instantly proceed to the prison in which he is confined."

"Well, but Henry, boy, don't do any thing rashly, listen to me, sit down a bit; now don't be on the huffey order, and don't put yourself in a passion."

"I am very seldom in a passion, I wish I could say never."

"I want to consult you on a pretty considerable matter, so leave me be, don't interrupt me, and keep coolish a few. Why should we stay to throw away our dollars in London, when I could pack up my duds and be off to-morrow; and I dare say brother Penguin will be offended, if we're tejus in showing ourselves up to Grotto-house. Snecks! why should we idle away any more time, 'since the used key is always bright,' as poor Richard says, 'and the

sleeping fox catches no poultry, and one to-day is worth two to-morrows.' Guess I sha'n't be sorry to get from this house slick right away, for the servants are little better than downright Mohawks ; never learnt their catechise, I reckon, for they can't keep their hands from picking and stealing. One of 'em, like that Injun-looking gal I took from Mr. Brigadier Mills, when we were away west on the seaboard-side ; what she can't carry away she eats, and what she can't eat she carries away. I wonder whether these creeturs be as tejus in Old England as they are in New. Torment us all ! these helps are the greatest plague in all natur. What say ? don't think they are ?"

" They may be a plague to those who plague them, and this is natural enough ; but in a general way I should affirm, that as good parents make good children, so good masters will always make good servants. If you give lower wages than others, you must expect to hire a person of cheaper moral character, for those who are respectable know their own value ; and if you grudge them their customary perquisites and

enjoyments, you should not be surprised if they endeavour to obtain them furtively. Were we not blinded by egotism, we should see that nothing can be more self-convicting than to complain of our servants, since the fault is likely to be our own, in the exact proportion of one to the aggregate number of all those by whom we consider ourselves maltreated. Habitual murmurers of this stamp are only unconsciously exclaiming—Behold! how sordid, selfish, bad-tempered, and tyrannical must we be! since the poorest menials, whose palpable interest it is to conciliate our regard, cannot submit to our caprices, cannot even remain under the same roof with us.”

“Hear him, hear him! there you go again! always taking the part of the tatterpallions, or else ’twouldn’t be you. Sneaks! you make quite the mischief among the servants by indulging them. Spile them all, instead of giving them a smart rattling now and then, and making ’em jump about as spry and active as if they were at a husking.”

“ But what is this important point upon which you wish to consult me ? ”

“ What *pint*, say ? ”

“ I said point, Madam.”

“ There you go again ! though you know I hate this new-fangled way of talking, worse than pizon. Why the pint is this, boy, that if you go running to help every fool that gets into gaol, you ’ll soon have to keep ’em company, and be the biggest fool of the whole lot. There ! that ’s into you, I reckon ! keep your cash, and your cash ’ll keep you ; be surety for no man if you wish to be sure of yourself : they who grant favours will soon have to ask them : ‘ remember, that a ploughman on his legs is taller than a nobleman on his knees,’ as poor Richard says.”

“ I will remember as much of your good advice as I can, without forgetting what is due to myself, and to such a friend as Enoch Clayton.”

“ Henry, Henry ! only stay to house till to-morrow. Rattlesnakes and ringums ! he ’s gone, or else I ’m up a tree ! Well, that beats all natur, and it’s no more use going to stop him in these fits than ’tis to whistle after a wild Mohawk.”

As there was indeed a calmness and decision in Henry's manner, that showed he had made up his mind to a purpose from which it would not be easy to deter him, Mrs. Tenby made no such attempt, and he accordingly quitted the house, and walked at a rapid pace towards the Fleet-prison ; thinking with a heavy heart of the misfortune of his young friend, incarcerated in a strange country, and perhaps without a single acquaintance in London to whom he could apply for assistance or advice.

For such meditations, however, but little time was allowed him, for as he was nimble in all his movements, especially when engaged upon any mission of benevolence, he had quickly reached the Fleet-prison. Just as he gained the entrance, his attention was attracted by a young woman, who, while she was being helped to descend from a hackney-coach at the gate, sobbed and wept with an hysterical vehemence that bespoke the utmost extremity of mental anguish. Her dress and appearance, which were not those of a Londoner, but of a respectable country girl, and above all, her evident misery, in-

terested him so deeply, that when she staggered into the lobby, supported by a sheriff's officer, he inquired from one of the under-gaolers her name, and the cause of her commitment. Referring to the warrant which had been delivered by the bailiff, the man replied, that her name was Lucy Hazelgrove, and that she had been arrested for a small debt, at the suit of Mrs. Jane Hudson ; adding, that the house, from which she came proved her to be " a dead bad one, spite of her wimpering and whining, and all that caterwauling, which in his opinion was nothing in the world but blarney, and sham Abraham."

It was one of Henry's characteristics never to pin his faith upon any man's sleeve, more especially never to trust disparaging assertions upon unsifted evidence, but in all things to see, inquire, judge, believe, and act for himself. A glimpse of the unfortunate girl's face, whereon were depicted a sorrow and terror that no impostor could assume, instantly chased from his mind all the injurious inuendoes of the gaoler ; while the name that he had heard determined him to put some questions to the wretched pri-

soner. Following her for this purpose into the lobby, he found her leaning upon a small deal table, with her face buried in her hands, crying piteously, and beating the floor with her feet, in all the passionate impatience of grief.

“My poor girl!” said Henry in the most soothing voice he could assume, “you seem to be in deep distress; can I do any thing to assist or comfort you?”

No notice was taken of this inquiry, and when he had repeated it in a louder voice, she only replied by an apparently angry shaking of the unlifted head, and a more rapid beating of the feet, as if she despaired of all human succour or consolation.

“Are you Lucy Haselgrove, of Roydon, in the New Forest?” inquired Henry.

At these words the convulsive movements of her body suddenly ceased, she slowly lifted up her head, and throwing aside her dishevelled, tear-wetted locks, fixed her eyes upon Henry with a wild look of inquiry, as if expecting to see a friend; but being unable to recognise his features, she uttered a deep sigh, and again sank

down upon the table, faintly sobbing, "Yes, Sir, yes; Lucy Haselgrove, of Roydon."

"And you were about to be married to my friend, Hodge Nettletop, if I am not mistaken? You need not reply; that start and that flush of agitation assure me that I have not been misinformed. Be of good cheer, Lucy, I will release you from this horrid place, I will send you back to you friends at Roydon."

Uttering an hysterical scream of surprise and joy, the poor girl started from her seat, threw herself upon the ground before Henry, passionately exclaiming as she clasped her uplifted hands together, "The Lord of Heaven bless and protect you, dear, good young gentleman! Oh! save me, save me! and I will pray for you to my dying day. Indeed, indeed, Sir, I have been cruelly used. I have been silly, and thoughtless, and misguided, enough, God knows! but I never meant any harm. I am innocent, Sir, I am indeed!"

"I firmly believe it from your looks alone," said Henry, stretching out his hand to raise her from the ground. The action, however,

was not so kindly taken as it was meant, for the poor girl, recoiling from his touch with a look of distrust, exclaimed—"But who are you, where do you come from, and whither do you want to take me?—I beg your pardon, Sir, I would not give offence—no, not for the world; but I have seen enough lately to make me believe that all gentlemen are villains."

Henry quickly succeeded in dispelling these excusable misgivings, not only by a countenance and tone of voice that even to the most suspicious would have carried instant conviction of his benevolence and truth, but by frankly stating his acquaintance with Thaxted and its neighbourhood, and adding, that if Lucy distrusted the motives of his interference, he would immediately withdraw, and entrust her liberation to the agency of his mother. Re-assured by these declarations, she implored his pardon, and entreated him not to leave her till he had heard her story, that she might stand justified in his eyes, and prove herself worthy of his generous intentions. It was some little time before her agitation would allow her to proceed,

but confidence in Henry's honour, together with the prospect of her liberation and rejoining her friends, having at length restored her to some degree of composure, she was enabled to tell her tale, which, however distressing to herself, presented a scene of male depravity unfortunately but too common. Won by the insidious attentions and flatteries of Captain Frampton, so seductive to a girl in humble life, and trusting to his solemn pledge that he would marry her upon her arrival in the metropolis, the well-meaning but weak and credulous Lucy, clandestinely quitting her home, travelled in the stage to London. Here she was met by the Captain, who still deluding her with the prospect of a marriage, placed her in an infamous house, hoping to effect his guilty purposes before she should discover the falsehood and villany of his professions. Accident, however, having revealed the real character of her abode, indignation and horror inspired her with resolution commensurate to her danger ; so that the Captain, finding the simple, pliable country-girl transformed into an angry accuser, who defied

his detected artifices, and threatened him with a public exposure if he persisted in them, thought it prudent to abandon a project which he now saw to be both hopeless and hazardous. He accordingly gave her a sum of money to carry her back to Roydon, enjoined a profound secrecy upon all that had occurred, made a lame apology for the part he had acted, which he attributed to her entire misapprehension of his expressions, and immediately afterwards quitted London for Norfolk, in company with a sporting companion.

The abandoned woman of the house, however, was not disposed thus to lose an inmate whom she had marked for her victim. Instead of suffering her to depart, she made her a close prisoner ; she stole in the night-time the money that had been given to her to convey her home ; every art of intimidation, cajolery, and seduction, was put in practice to bend the unfortunate Lucy to the purposes of her establishment ; and when all failed, the heartless wretch arrested her inmate for board and lodging, partly from a feeling of vindictive disappointment, and partly in the hope that the ter-

rors of a gaol would speedily overcome her stubborn scruples.

Such was the substance of the story narrated by Lucy, not without the frequent interruption of tears, self-exculpations, and indignant arraignments of her betrayer. These emotions, however, were trifling in vehemence, compared to the transport of remorse into which she burst, when Henry informed her that Hodge, almost broken-hearted at her inconstancy, had enlisted for a soldier; and when he proceeded to state the manner in which his discharge had been procured, she again threw herself at the feet of his liberator, and actually embraced his knees in the ecstasy of her gratitude. "But, my poor girl," said Henry, as he raised, and replaced her in her chair, "if you were so much attached to young Nettletop, as you appear, how comes it that you deserted him for a comparative stranger?"

"Because, Sir, I was a wicked, wicked, *wicked* girl," sobbed Lucy; "and yet not so wicked neither, but believed it to be my duty, because the Captain,—(a base, false-hearted

fellow, how I hate him now !) promised to do great things for our family, and I thought how fine it would be, if I could prevent father, now that he is getting old, from working any more, and let him sit by the fire every day with his pipe and pot of Brackenhurst ale. And then I thought how delighted mother would be to go to church every Sunday in a silk gown, which is what she has set her heart on ever since Mrs. Stubbs had one. And then I thought I would show Nancy Patching, who was always fleering at me for going to be married to a ploughboy ;—Nancy is a very pert, stuck-up-thing, I can assure you, Sir, or else I shouldn't ha' cared,—I thought I would show her that I might have a finer gentleman for my husband than ever she could. But I'm sure I cried all the way to Lunnun for thinking of poor Hodge, and now I've lost him for ever, and it serves me quite right, for I'm a very vain, good-for-nothing, silly, wicked, wicked girl."

Here she burst into a fresh passion of grief, which Henry tried to assuage, by assuring her

that her subsequent resolution and good conduct had done much to atone for her first imprudence, and that her future life might, perhaps, be rendered more happy, through the stability of character which her present painful experience would create.

Under the impression that his imprisoned friend might require some immediate pecuniary supply, Henry had, previously to his leaving home, replenished his purse. With this money he now discharged the demand against Lucy, and bidding her remain in the lobby till he returned, proceeded into the interior of the prison, where he quickly recognised Enoch Clayton, who, from the intelligence he had received of his absence in the country, was not less surprised than delighted to see him. Though the sum for which that young man had become security, to oblige a friend, did not exceed his ultimate means, it was beyond the reach of his available resources, and his imprisonment must have continued till his funds became disposable, for he was almost a total stranger in England. Henry was the more

rejoiced to find that the amount was within the compass of his own fortune, and though it very nearly exhausted the little accumulations of his minority, he gave an order upon his agent for the sum with much greater pleasure than most men would have felt in doubling their property, instead of reducing it to a mere trifle.

Much as they had to say to one another, the colloquy of the friends was a short one; for Henry felt that Lucy was in no fitting state of mind to be left, nor did he like that she should be exposed to the impertinent curiosity, or coarse ribaldry of the inferior prison officers. Taking, therefore, a hasty leave of his friend, after having given him his address at Grotto-house, he returned to the lobby, ordered a hackney-coach to be called, and had the pleasure, which none but hearts like his can experience in all its exquisiteness, of handing Lucy into it, freed for ever from the clutches of her infamous landlady, and uncontaminated by any acquaintance with the corrupting interior of a gaol. The words "flat!" and "bubble!" muttered by some of the by-

standers around the lobby met his ear more than once; while others, who considered him to be the duper rather than the dupe, intimated by significant winks to one another, that they attributed his conduct to any thing rather than the benevolent feelings in which it originated; but in the conscious rectitude of his own motives, Henry despised covert surmises, as he would equally have done open accusations; and nothing, therefore, disturbed the pure complacency of his heart as he drove towards his mother's lodgings.

Not a single particle of complacency entered into the feelings of that lady when Henry, after having left Lucy in another room, went into the parlour to communicate what he had done, and to bespeak his mother's kindness for their new and most unexpected inmate. Averse as she knew him to be in general from joke and banter, she could not but imagine him to be indulging some momentary *badi-nage*, under which impression she exclaimed, "Snecks! Henry, old birds, like me, are not to be caught with chaff! You're poking fun

at me, I know you are; for you would never be such a tarnal simpleton, as to be gudgeoned by a common trull and tramper. Guess you're a little on the bamboozling order this morning."

"I am sorry, Madam, that you should think me capable of uttering an untruth even in jest; still more so that you should imagine poor Lucy to be an improper character; and in order to prove to you that you have done us both an injustice, I shall take leave to introduce her to your acquaintance."

He was leaving the room for the purpose of conducting Lucy into it, when Mrs. Tenby, who saw at once that he was in earnest, laid her hand upon his shoulder, and gently staying him—for she knew that persuasion was much more likely than imperative demeanour to succeed with one of so decided a character—implored him to furnish her some farther explanations before he brought the creature into her presence. These were readily given; and it was with no small satisfaction that she learned the trifling amount of the debt discharged,

though she failed not to enlarge upon the gross imprudence of bringing the girl to the house ; a proceeding which was sure to subject him to all sorts of calumnious imputation from the illiberal."

" I reverence public opinion too much," said Henry, " to defy it needlessly. The fear of its censure is most salutary ; it is a sort of external conscience that deters many a man from open misconduct, as the inward conscience dissuades him from even concealed offence. But there should be bounds to its influence ; and many occasions may arise wherein a man ought to have moral courage enough to disregard it. I have brought Lucy hither, because I know no other roof beneath which she could be placed without incurring a danger from which I am determined to snatch her. Any one may defame me and my motives, but no one can make me infamous but myself ; and while I have the approbation of my own heart, I may well despise the calumnies of the profligates and slanderers who judge of others by themselves."

“ Snecks! what a tarnal lengthy speech: got it out of a book, that’s my guess. Well, boy, I know there’s no more turning you from your purposes, however mischeevous they may be, than one can turn a bear out of a hemlock wood; and so the creature shall sleep here to-night, and I will consent that she shall accompany us to Thaxted, upon one condition, and that is, that we start by the coach to-morrow morning.”

This proposition was a little finesse on the part of Mrs. Tenby, who possessed a certain degree of cunning which she mistook for acuteness. As Henry had said nothing about Enoch Clayton, she concluded that he had been altogether forgotten in the absorbing interest excited by Lucy; and knowing that his generosity would prompt him to liberate the man who had once ventured his life for him, she had assented to his wishes, trusting that her stipulation for departing on the morrow would prevent all interview between the friends, and save Henry’s finances from the threatened assault. She would not even trust him out of her sight

during the remainder of the evening, but sent the servant to secure places in the stage-coach, which, on the following day, conveyed them all three in perfect safety to Thaxted.

That Lucy and her lover may not call upon us for any farther notice, we may here state, that Henry made it his first business to see honest Hodge, and having restated the Malthusian theory, by which he pronounced his auditor to be unjustified in marrying, considering his little prospect of maintaining a family, he proceeded to relate Lucy's history, extenuating her indiscretion, extolling the courage and firmness which had fortunately enabled her to return to Roydon as pure and virtuous as when she had quitted it, and prophecying, that the experience she had gained would render her more prudent and steady than ever she had been before.

"As to muster Malthouse," said Hodge in reply, "him and me doesn't agree; seeing whereby, that as our fathers and mothers married afore we, why shouldn't us marry a'ter they; and that, I look upon't, there's no an-

swering. But as to what you say, about Lucy's being all the better for this little freak, why, there's some gumption in it, and I'll give you a proof on 't. Did you know Farmer Patching's swish-tail grey mare, that he used to drive in a chay-cart? Well, we put her to plough, one day, and she kicked, and plunged, and got loose, and jumped over hedge and ditch, and ran off, and two days after we found her in Shirley Pound. Heart alive, Sir! that day's nonsense cured her of all her tantrums for ever; for she had torn her shoulder, cut her fetlock, and had little or no feed the whole time; so, when she came back, she took to plough as if she had been used to it all her life. I drive her now sometimes as leader, with two yoke of oxen, and a quieter beast never touched collar."

Henry did not offer to dispute the justice of Hodge's conclusions respecting Lucy, drawn from the premises of Farmer Patching's grey mare. He had performed what he considered to be his duty, in advising him to defer his marriage until he should be in more prosperous circumstances; but as Hodge was anxious

to hasten the wedding, and Lucy, grateful for his kindness and constancy, interposed no obstacle, the ceremony was soon after performed. Henry was present at the solemnity, and we have much pleasure in recording, before we proceed with our history, that his predictions and Hodge's, as to the future good conduct of Lucy, were abundantly justified by the event.

CHAPTER X.

To show in what manner they felt, when they placed themselves, by the power of imagination, in trying circumstances, in the conflicts of duty and passion, or the strife of contending duties; what sort of loves and enmities their's were; how their griefs were tempered, and their full swollen joys abated; how much of Shakspeare shines in the great men his contemporaries, and how far, in his divine mind and manners, he surpassed them and all mankind.

CHARLES LAMB.

MRS. PENGUIN and Mrs. Tenby might be considered as not unapt representatives of the different styles of beauty in English and American women of middle age. The former, who was indeed so much younger than her visitant, that she would have spurned the indefinite term by which we have signified her to be no longer in the first bloom of youth, was plump almost

to an undue rotundity of figure, with a fine blooming complexion, blue eyes, and light hair ; a combination which, in the country circles, had procured for her the reputation of a *belle*, though in London she would hardly have obtained any higher praise than that of being a handsome, rustic-looking woman. However brightly the roses might have once flourished in Mrs. Tenby's cheeks, they had now withered, leaving her oval-shaped face and still handsome features of a clear and uniform, but somewhat sallow hue, relieved, however, by a pair of sparkling dark eyes, and tresses rather remarkable for their glossy raven hue than their profusion. In figure she was tall and thin, exhibiting at the same time a more sinewy strength than accords with English notions of feminine delicacy and beauty.

Little as was the external resemblance between the two ladies, there was still less consimilarity in their characters, and it might therefore have been surmised, that the compact of amity, composed of such discordant elements, would not be of very long continuance ; but Mrs. Tenby, being

by no means of an unaccommodating disposition where her interests were concerned, and having, moreover, too great a reverence for poor Richard's maxims to quarrel with her bread-and-butter, felt not the smallest disposition to sacrifice her gratuitous peek and perch, (to use her own phrase,) from considerations of idle punctilio. Having penetration enough to discover, from a few casual hints which Mrs. Penguin suffered to escape on the subject of her dialect and her dress, the real state of that lady's feelings towards her, she prudently resolved to remove all objections that might interfere with the length of her visit. As to her language, indeed, she declared it to be the true "raal old Virginny," which, in spite of all Henry's attempts at its correction, she would not and could not adapt to the foolish fashions of the Old Englanders; but as to her economical mode of dressing, that should not annoy any body; she had no money, not she, to throw away upon the extravagant vagaries of fashion; she hated visitors and visiting; if they would only "leave her be," and give her a room to herself,

she would retire to it when strangers came to the house, decline all invitations in which she might be included, and interfere with nobody, since there was nothing she liked so much as a quiet domestic life. In the apprehension that even these concessions might not be considered sufficient, she took care to hold out a prospect of her removal, without however pledging herself to any definite period.

All the facilities towards a mutual good understanding, and her own lengthened visit, which the prudent Mrs. Tenby was thus anxious to afford, were in danger of being rendered nugatory by a most unexpected allusion to the scantiness of her own finances, and the still more limited means of Henry. Much as Mrs. Penguin had been captivated by the latter in their short acquaintance, her more influencing motives for inviting him to the house had been the belief in his wealth, the probability that this would be attested by some sort of equipage and display, and the prospect of the gentility which would be reflected upon themselves from such respectable and opulent connexions. To

have this glittering day-dream kicked down at once, like the golden reyerie of Alnaschar; to find that Mrs. Tenby possessed but a very moderate share of fortune to atone for her liberal portion of vulgarity, was indeed a sore trial for Mrs. Penguin's patience; while even those personal recommendations of Henry, which had in the first instance so won upon her heart, seemed to lose some portion of their bloom, beauty, and wonder, now that she contemplated him as a comparative pauper, instead of his being gifted with all the fascinations and magical influences which she attributed to the young and handsome possessor of a large fortune.

Aware that she herself had been the principle agent in circulating the rumour of Henry's opulence through the neighbourhood, and magnifying its amount, she determined to shift the responsibility as much as possible from her own shoulders, by throwing the whole blame upon her hapless husband. Thus inculpated, the poor geologist repeated in his defence the exact words made use of by Henry, namely, that he was in independent circumstances, a phrase upon

which his wife had built up a superstructure not less magnificent than visionary, but which Mrs Tenby demolished in an instant, by declaring that Henry, utterly incapable of any misrepresentation, even by innuendo, still less of a direct falsehood, was of such unexpensive habits, and of so philosophical a turn of mind, that he considered a hundred a year a perfect independence. True as this might be, she added, so far as his own personal wants were concerned, the term could scarcely be applied with propriety to any one who, like Henry, was apt to consider the need of others much more than his own.

All this afforded little consolation to Mrs. Penguin, who, in addition to her immediate sources of vexation, foresaw that she would be placed in a very awkward dilemma, when the vulgarity of Mrs. Tenby and the poverty of Henry should be bruited about the neighbourhood. She felt that she occupied a false position in society, and was exposed to all the annoyances that such a situation is sure to engender. In fact, she feared any imputation, of whatever nature, that might occasion a scrutiny into her

early life, since the divulgement of that ante-connubial lapse from virtue, to which we have already slightly alluded, but which she had hitherto succeeded in keeping a profound secret, would probably occasion her instant exclusion from those circles into which she had crept, at no small expense of time and trouble. Any such discovery, too, was likely to mar for ever her projects in getting her husband's whole fortune secured to her by will. This was the real motive of all her affected fondness, of her feigned subservience but real domination; for her extravagance and love of pleasure rendered money necessary to her, and the great disparity of their ages authorised her in looking forward to a period when she should be enabled to enjoy the wealth she coveted, and follow the impulses of her passions, without the incumbrance of an old husband.

On all these accounts she felt the predicament in which she was placed to be a very delicate one, and even began to question the necessity, or at all events, the prudence of undeceiving the neighbourhood as to Henry's

imputed wealth. To sustain the delusion, however, it was necessary that he himself should become an accessory in her plans, a point which she lost all hope of accomplishing from the first moment after having stated the dilemma in which she had unwittingly placed herself.—“No consideration on earth,” said Henry, “shall ever induce me to lend myself to the establishment of an erroneous impression; believing, as I do, that he who is ashamed of his poverty would be proud of his riches, I could have no wish to conceal my real circumstances. When, therefore, I said I was in independent circumstances, I used a common, but foolish, because indefinite phrase; I should have stated my real income; for where misconstruction may arise, we cannot be too explicit. I am sorry for the misapprehension to which I have so unintentionally given rise, and as my silence might occasion its continuance, I shall omit no opportunity of explaining and correcting it.”

Mrs. Penguin, who had tact enough to perceive that he was inexorable in all his rightful

purposes, did not ask him, as she had first intended, to collude with her in supporting the false opinion of his wealth, especially as he offered to take upon his own shoulders the whole blame of the mistake that had sprung from his ambiguous expression. Vexed as she was at his determination to undeceive the neighbourhood, she could not help respecting the uncompromising firmness of his character, contrasting, as it did, with the weak pliability of her husband, whom she could mould to any purpose that she pleased, and whom she secretly despised even for yielding to her own caprices.

It has been said, that the faulty invariably hate those who, being free from their own errors, offer to them a perpetual though involuntary reproach. This is not always the case. Mrs. Penguin, for instance, who was herself a most lax observer of truth, could not help honouring Henry on account of his scrupulous regard for veracity, as much as she had admired him for his inflexibility of purpose. Being herself a woman of strong, though unregulated and mis-

directed mind, she could sympathise to a certain extent with one whose energies were devoted to better purposes. Penguin's frivolity and imbecility, when brought in daily and immediate contrast with Henry's superior faculties and personal recommendations, seemed to justify her increasing contempt of her husband, and almost to sanction that growing attachment for their visitant which she now began to indulge with all the recklessness of an unprincipled mind, and all the ardour of a prurient temperament. At first, indeed, she had abandoned herself to her infatuation without contemplating any thing criminal, but she felt not the smallest disposition to check her career, even when she saw that it pointed to a guilty conclusion. The prospect of this consummation, however, worked a very marked change in her demeanour, for whereas, she had hitherto been open and unguarded in her familiar intercourse with the object of her undeveloped affection, calling him always Henry, or dear Henry, and suffering the presence of her husband to make no alteration in her deportment, she began, when

her passion assumed an illicit character, to exhibit a pointed coldness and reserve towards him when Penguin was in the apartment, generally terming him Mr. Melcomb, and often affecting an indifference that seemed to be altogether unconscious of his presence. In the hearing of her spouse, too, she became more than usually moral and sentimental, inveighing with great bitterness against those female delinquents who proved unfaithful to their marriage vows; thanking heaven that she was blessed with a good husband, and generally ending with some virtuous and sententious precept in the Joseph Surface vein, which hypocritical assumptions of superior morality were as regularly followed by the usual whispering ejaculations from the husband of "faithful creature!—high principled woman!" and "exemplary wife!"

For the constraint thus put upon her feelings she took ample satisfaction when alone with Henry, by giving him to understand her thorough contempt for her husband, to which, as her depraved wishes gathered strength, she

added such lures, blandishments, and seductive fascinations, as she thought best calculated to inflame his passions, and win him to her purposes. That he would have scruples of conscience, that he would not be entrapped without a struggle to escape, she fully expected, from that high principle of honour and sacred respect for virtue, which, upon all occasions, he exhibited, and which, in so young a man, she set down for a squeamish and fastidious puritanism. She relied, however, upon her powers of inveiglement, against which she believed that no puritan, more especially a young one, could be proof; and perhaps it might have been difficult to find another who would have resisted her temptations with such an invincible firmness as Henry. Such, indeed, was the simplicity of his own heart, that for a long time, however he might be surprised at her inconsistent laxity of discourse and demeanour, he was preserved from her bewitchments by not understanding their aim and import. Henry, moreover, had a deep, heart-pervading reverence for the female character, looking upon woman as the redeem-

ing portion of humanity, whose purity, disinterestedness, truth, and sweetness, hallowed our common nature, and made angelic expiation for the grossness, the vices, and the grovelling propensities of the other sex. Woman was to him a sort of earthly deity, whom it was religion to love with that ennobling worship which is alone worthy of its object when it leads to an imitation of her virtues. He could not have outlived his solemn convictions of the general purity and truth of woman, without feeling that his own blood was polluted ; that all the beauty and blossom of life, all the charms and sanctities of existence had withered away ; that hope and joy were for ever dead within him ; that he had, in fact, survived his own heart.

Cherishing in his bosom such a high and holy faith in female virtue, he did not for some time suspect the nature of the advances by which he was assailed ; though he had no sooner marked the inconsistency of Mrs. Penguin's demeanour when in the presence or in the absence of her husband, than he began to despise her for her hypocrisy, and to avoid, with an

instinctive apprehension, those opportunities for their being left alone together, which she was perpetually seeking to create. Henry was not insensible (what young man ever was so?) to the influences of female beauty, especially when all its blandishments and allurements were put forth to captivate him; but his exalted sense of honour, his unassailable steadfastness of principle, would not allow him to regard the wife of the friend in whose house he was living, with any other admiration than that which he might have innocently bestowed upon a beautiful statue. It was, besides, the moral, rather than the personal attractions of woman, that captivated his regard; when this sanctifying grace was gone, nothing beautiful was left; and to be a confessed wanton was, in the eyes of Henry, to be not less repulsive in person than hateful in mind.

Never, therefore, would he have fallen a victim to the seductions of an adulteress, even had not his bosom at this period become gradually sanctified by a pure love, calculated to expel from it every licentious thought. Short as had been

his abode in London, and actively as he had been employed, his mind had perpetually reverted to Emily Welbeck; to their pleasant rambles in the neighbourhood of Southampton; to their brief interviews at Thaxted; to the universal and enthusiastic praises that attested her amiability, charity, and virtue; to the mournful, deserted-looking old Manor-house wherein she lived in almost cloistered sequestration; to the patient sorrow that sate upon the marble beauty of her features. Such a combination as this was especially adapted to address itself to the heart and the imagination of Henry. Happy and obtrusive beauty might have won his passing admiration, but meek loveliness pining in seclusion, and apparently striving to alleviate its secret grief by the practices of benevolence towards others, and a filial devotedness to an eccentric, unamiable father, presented an union of duty, of charms, and of sorrow, which, when it had once taken possession of his bosom, speedily entwined itself around every fibre of his heart. It may hardly be necessary therefore to state, that the Manor-

house was one of the first places which he visited after his return to Thaxted; and yet he did not venture upon this measure without some degree of apprehension, for understanding Welbeck to be a wayward and capricious being, who formed sudden dislikes, and stood not upon the smallest ceremony in expressing them, he dreaded lest a splenetic interdict should be put upon his future visits. By a fortunate chance, Welbeck was not only in a gracious mood when he called, but disposed to be particularly cordial towards one who had in some degree advanced his interests, by being an active supporter of the fair. Henry was farthermore destined to be lucky in this visit, at least in the first part of it, by ingratiating himself upon another subject. A volume of plays which Emily had been reading to her father occasioned the conversation to turn upon the dramatists of the olden times; Welbeck exclaimed, with an elevation of style, and an animated manner that seldom failed him when discussing such topics, "Ha, Sir! do you talk of the mighty masters, of the spirit-stirring magicians, of the intellectual giants who imme-

diately preceding, or accompanying the advent of our glorious Shakspeare, wielded the human passions like thunderbolts, electrifying with fire and light the new mental world that they had created ? What should you know of those stars of the poetical sky ? how can you appreciate the beauty of the spheres in which they moved ? you who, in our first interview, professed yourself to be an utilitarian, and who therefore, as I presume, would measure every thing by the mechanical line and rule of dry usefulness, or reduce it to a precise standard of value ; you who would, doubtless, share the sentiment of the elder Knowell in the play, when he condemned his son for

‘ Dreaming on nought but idle poetry,
That useless and unprofitable art,
Good unto none, but least to the professors !’

And yet, Sir, if you can speak admiringly of these divine artists, there may be ultimate hope of you, even when you would depreciate their art.”

“ You have quite mistaken me,” said Henry ;

“ I spoke of the admiration they had excited in others rather than in myself ; for my education in a remote settlement in America has prevented my ever having had access to these writers, nor did I undervalue their art when it is directed, as it ever should be, to high moral purposes. Most true it is, that I prefer the useful learning which, when it enlightens our understanding, may enable us practically to meliorate the lot of humanity, to those vain studies which feed the vanity of erudition, although their empty sound is but as that of a tinkling cymbal.”

“ Why, this is something, young man, but we will not be content with so poor and cold a suffrage. I will lend you some of these noble old dramatists. See ! do they not look venerable upon yonder shelf, those goodly quartos in their plain dark covers ? You shall read them, that, instead of this negative praise, you may have warrant for becoming a true and zealous worshipper of poetry. If you like spirit-stirring themes, that shall make your heart leap as at the blast of a trumpet ; if you ever wish to

escape from yourself, to tear away your thoughts from remorse for the past, or apprehension for the future, this should be your only reading."

"Possessing my soul in uninterrupted tranquillity, I need not any stimulants to draw me from self-reflection, nor do I find any delight in the tumult of violent sensations. That is to me the best poetry which, appealing to the heart rather than to the head or the imagination, incites us through its pleasurable medium to the performance of our duties ; teaching us, that the purest and most acceptable homage we can offer to the Deity, is to love and benefit, to the utmost of our ability, all our fellow-creatures."

"I fear, Sir," said Emily, addressing herself to Henry, "that so far from finding that pure and lofty morality, which I agree with you in thinking the noblest consummation of poetry, you will, when perusing our older dramatists, discover much to pardon in the grossness of an imperfectly civilized age. I am myself often revolted, nor should I ever take down these volumes but to oblige my dear father,

who doats upon them, to the exclusion of all other literature."

"Why, my child, why? Because they are the sole magicians, whose potent spells can silence the whisperings that I would not hear, can cast forth devils from my bosom, can conjure me for a while out of myself, can even sometimes—"

"And yet," exclaimed Emily, eagerly interrupting her father, as if anxious to prevent the conclusion of his speech, "Mr. Melcomb will find little of this potent agency in the simple and unimpassioned Heywood, whose plays I hold in my hand. He will say, perhaps, that he occasionally exalts his heroines to a romantic and unnatural pitch of excellence; but this is surely a generous and pardonable fault, springing as it does from the enthusiasm of virtue. If writers cannot paint our frail humanity as it really is, it is better for all parties that women should be drawn as angels rather than as devils; and I should not like Mr. Melcomb to begin with any author who might give him disparaging notions of our sex."

The sudden thought, that what she had been saying might be construed to have some oblique reference to herself and her auditor, brought a blush over the transparent alabaster of her features, as she cast her eyes timidly down to the ground. Henry, who fully appreciated the delicacy and purity of her sentiments, thought, as he gazed upon her, that he had never seen a more bewitching union of moral and personal beauty ; and it was therefore with a correspondent admiration and earnestness that he exclaimed ;—" Entertain no apprehensions on my account, for you yourself have furnished me a sufficient antidote against any such poisonous insinuations. In all things I endeavour to think and act for myself ; and upon this point, more than any other, I will never, never suffer myself to be seduced from my faith !"

An ennobling sentiment, of whatever nature, instantly affected the feelings of Emily, accustomed as she was to hear few from her father, but such as were of a grovelling and misanthropical tendency. Upon the present occasion,

her heart swelled with a proud pleasure, and a tear trembled beneath their lids as she raised her eyes, and threw a timid but approving glance at Henry. Momentary as it was, it conveyed the whole history of her heart. It was so felt and so understood by Henry ; and from that instant, though their passion had never been translated into words, they knew themselves to be mutual lovers.

To relieve herself from the embarrassing silence that ensued, Emily plunged into another subject, talking eagerly, and at first not very coherently, about the occurrences at Hordle Cliff, the return of Lucy Haselgrove to her friends, and her reconciliation with young Nettletop, of all which she had heard, and had been delighted beyond measure with Henry's generous conduct in those transactions, though she dared not trust her tongue with any present expression of her approbation. Her companion was but too happy to prolong the conversation, whatever turn it might take, especially as they now pursued it without interruption from Welbeck, who, as soon as they ceased discoursing on the old drama-

tists, sate apart, in a silent, moody abstraction, which gradually assumed the appearance of a painful, agitating reverie. His brows were knit together, he gazed around him, sometimes with a vacant scowl, sometimes with a look of restless, searching apprehension ; he bit his lips, his hands clenched and opened themselves as if involuntarily, he uttered a half-suppressed groan, and starting from his chair, paced up and down the room with hurried steps and a bewildered air. Emily, who, notwithstanding her delighted interest in the conversation she was maintaining, had anxiously watched her father's rising emotions, took down a play-book that had been promised to Henry, and presented it to him, as if to intimate that he should depart. This he was about to do, when Welbeck, intercepting him in his progress towards the door, abruptly exclaimed. " You have forests in America, have you not, young man ? vast, dark, primeval, boundless forests, almost impenetrable, or at least but rarely trodden by any human foot. Now and then, as I have been told, some forlorn wretch, who hath within him ' undi-

vulged crimes, unwhipt of justice,' will betake himself to these silent wildernesses, and being safe from the pursuit of avenging man, and brought into communion with Nature in all her loneliness and sublimity, will escape from the tormenting stings of conscience, and even taste tranquillity, if not happiness."

"I do not think," replied Henry, "that solitude is good for man, whether innocent or guilty. I have heard of gloomy and, perhaps, criminal beings who, having fled into the sombre depths of forests, have been so maddened into misanthropy, that they have waged indiscriminate war against their species, until they themselves were finally hunted down like wild beasts. Of some, however, I have been told, who, turning anchorites, have found in those woody recesses a peace and repose that were denied to them in the world: and I can well believe it; for I imagine that any offender who is sincerely contrite, and has atoned for his misdeeds to the utmost of his ability, may commit himself, even to a lonely hermitage, with a fair prospect of being reconciled to Heaven and to himself."

“No, no, not for me is there any such hope, never, never!” muttered Welbeck, in a tone and with a look of fierce bitterness. “The dreariest desert and the most forlorn wilderness would reject him who has the eldest, first-born curse upon his head.”

“Here is the book, Sir, here,” said Emily, in much agitation, speaking loud, as if to drown her father’s voice, and hurrying Henry towards the door, which she hastily shut behind her, and then continued in a lower tone. “You must take no notice of my dear father, nor pay the smallest heed to what he says, should you ever see him in these moods, for his feelings are so sensitive, and are sometimes thrown into such a state of morbid excitement by poring upon these dramas, that, as he quotes the passages that have struck him, he will almost fancy himself the real character he is representing, and be as much overcome as if he had actually committed the crimes of these tragic heroes. It is a distressing sensibility, and as it has given rise to much idle talk, you need not mention what

you have seen or heard. Good morning, Sir, good morning; excuse this unceremonious dismissal. I must return to my dear father; he will be quite calm again when the momentary illusion has passed away."

Henry took his leave, and Emily was about to hasten back, when she saw old Wiverley, the clerk, approaching with a letter. Not choosing that he should see her father in his present agitated state, she said she would herself deliver the letter, and returned into the parlour for that purpose. Welbeck had sunk into a chair, exhausted by the vehemence of his emotions; his head was resting on his hand, and the perspiration was visible upon his forehead. As his daughter entered, he raised himself upright in his seat, and pressing his hand upon his bosom, said in a low hollow voice,

"Astonishment,
Fear, and amazement, beat upon my heart,
Even as a madman beats upon a drum."

Thinking it might turn the current of his thoughts, she placed the letter before him, when

he exclaimed with a start—"Ha ! has the post come in ? Where are the newspapers ? where are the newspapers ?"

" I suppose the servant is drying them below ; I dare say they will be brought up presently."

" Child, child ! let them be given to me instantly, whether wet or dry. I will break no seal, I will read nothing till I have seen them." As he spoke he rang the bell with a fretful impatience, not new to Emily, who, although she was utterly unable to divine the reason, knew that her unhappy parent had, for many years, daily pored over the advertisements in the papers with a tremulous anxiety, and was ever nervous and irritable until he had completed this process. The papers were brought to him ; he ran over the advertisements in a rapid general glance at first, and then deliberately one by one, appearing to breathe more freely, and to wear a more composed and assured look when he had gone through them all. After a pause of some continuance, during which he seemed to be struggling to throw off

the dismal dreams by which he had been oppressed, he opened the letter, his countenance brightening, and his voice again becoming animated, as he exclaimed, “ Emy, my darling, these are pleasant tidings, and they come at a seasonable moment to dispel these hypochondriacal visions by which I am haunted. Here is a letter from the Earl of Latchmore ; Lord Fawley is better, there are even hopes that he may recover without proceeding to the South of Europe. Ha ! this is well, this is well ! my plans for your advancement, the hopes of my latter life, the reward of all my sufferings, of all my offences, shall yet be realized, and I shall not have coiled snakes around my heart in vain ! My desk, my desk ! I will write instantly to the Earl to congratulate him ; and mind, Emy, that we drink poor Fawley’s health after dinner. Were it the last glass that I should ever taste, I would quaff it cheerfully to such a toast.—Quick, quick ! my desk ! ”

CHAPTER XI.

This my mean task would be
As heavy to me as 'tis odious, but
The mistress whom I serve quickens what's dead,
Oh ! she is
Ten times more gentle than her father's crabbed,
And he's composed of harshness.

THE TEMPEST.

NOTHING so much sharpens the apprehension, nothing renders a man more quick-sighted and penetrative, than love. In general, it might be said that Henry was slow to perceive and take advantage of circumstances that tended merely to his own benefit, but no sooner did he discover that he might obtain an easy passport to the Manor-house, through the medium of these old plays, than he began to study them with a diligence in which his heart had at least as much share as his head. From Emily's con-

versation, as well as from what he had himself observed, he gathered, that although Welbeck might be occasionally excited and overcome by certain passages appealing to some secret remorse or fear that disturbed his conscience, he in general derived a solace from the perusal of these works, since they could frequently abstract him from himself, without touching the sore place in his heart. By attending to this peculiarity, by selecting for the subjects of his conversation such plays as were conversant with the gentler passions, and avoiding the more revolting scenes of crime, anguish, and remorse, he contrived to engage Welbeck in long and frequent dramatic discussions, with only very rare ebullitions of the passionate and self-accusing nature, which we described in our last chapter. When these did occur, Henry instantly withdrew from the room, so that Welbeck, not less pleased with the discretion, than with the intelligence and ardour of his young pupil, for such he called him, invited him frequently to the house, and seemed never more happy than when he could closet him in his own little

room over the entrance porch, and take down, for their morning's lecture, some dark old quarto, from amid the loaded fire-arms which this singular and suspicious being constantly kept ready for his defence, though no one but himself ever dreamt of attack or danger.

In the part that Henry thus acted, there was nothing disingenuous, nothing inconsistent with the strictest veracity, for he neither praised nor censured, except in perfect accordance with his own convictions. Although he wished to ingratiate himself with his companion, and almost feared to irritate by contradiction a temper so morbidly sensitive, he neither scrupled to differ from him at times, nor to maintain his own opinions, temperately but firmly; and Welbeck, who, like all strong-minded men, hated servile assentations, and liked a controversy, however earnest and eager, upon a favourite topic, loved his pupil the better for his independent way of thinking, and his courage and talent in asserting it. Upon subjects essentially dramatic, such as the beauty of the language, the skill with which the characters or the fable were developed, or

the merits of the respective authors, they seldom differed ; for Henry, mistrusting his own judgment, was willing to defer to one whose reading had been so much more extensive ; but upon points of morality they generally disagreed, and as Henry would not recede an inch from any position of this nature that he had once taken, their discussions sometimes became sufficiently warm and animated to assume the appearance of disputes, and to alarm the timid Emily. Welbeck was of a misanthropical turn, ever imputing the most sordid and selfish motives to the actions of mankind, and maintaining, that as life was a mere struggle, a sort of gladiatorial arena, in which each individual must either conquer or be crushed, every man was justified in waging a self-defensive war against his species. This he affirmed to be the general system of Nature, appealing, in confirmation, to the animal world, where each class preyed incessantly upon the other, and mutual destruction was the ordained system of existence. “ Or, if you want human testimony,” would he sometimes exclaim with a peculiar taunting tone,

that left it in doubt whether he spoke seriously or ironically, "What say the masters, the moral dissectors, who have probed humanity to the quick, and found it rotten?" And he would then pour forth misanthropical quotations from the rich dramatic storehouse of his memory, with a profusion, and in a triumphant mood, that were apparently meant to overwhelm his young opponent.

Henry, however, who was not of a disposition to be either hoodwinked by sophistry, or silenced by declamation, exposed the fallacy of imputing to an author the immoral sentiments which he might think it characteristic to assign to rogues and fools, who were besides generally self-punished by their profligacy; he eagerly upheld the nobleness and dignity of man, and stigmatised the slanderous insinuations of the misanthropist, as treason against human nature, and a blaspheming of the Deity, by disparaging his most perfect work, the only one formed in his own image.

With these sentiments, however diametrically opposed to his own, Welbeck did not seem to be seriously offended, though he might warmly

controvert them; viewing them rather with a compassionate regard as the generous delusion of inexperienced youth, confessing that he had once entertained somewhat similar notions himself, and predicting that time and intercourse with the world would turn all this milk of human kindness into bitterness, just as sweet wine is changed into vinegar by age and exposure to the elements. With some such sinister prophecy he generally concluded the discussion, never closing it, however, without inviting his opponent to an early renewal of his visit.

At these colloquies Emily was often present, sometimes taking a share in them, though her timid, retiring nature, and her dread of her father's morbid excitability, rarely allowed her to follow up her arguments in defence of human virtue with half the zeal that she felt. So earnest an advocate as Henry, however, needed no coadjutor; and she was well content to sit listening to his noble sentiments, her countenance beaming with a radiant satisfaction, and her heart throbbing with an emotion that often brought tears of pleasure into her eyes, at the

expression of his high and holy thoughts, every one of which, as it fell from his lips, struck and thrilled upon a correspondent chord within her own bosom. Sometimes, when he called at the Manor-house, the Justice would be absent in the performance of his magisterial duties, or on other affairs of business; and upon these occasions the young lovers, for such they had now decidedly become, unassailed by any worldly or hateful maxims that might clash with their congenial sympathies, indulged in an unrestrained interchange of thought, probing one another's minds, and each mind becoming daily more enamoured of the purity, disinterestedness, benignity, and exalted virtue that it discovered in the other. Where there are differences to adjust, dissimilarities to reconcile, or any contraries of character to bring into harmony, love is slow and balancing in its progress; but where it springs from a kindred excellence, and a perfect congeniality of thought and feeling, it is generally of rapid growth. Such was the progress of the passion that had sprung up to maturity and deeply-rooted itself in the bosoms

of Henry and Emily, in a space of time that would have been inadequate to the production of such an effect, but for its affinity with the soil that produced it, and with the elements by which it was nurtured.

It has been said, in the earlier part of our history, that Henry was a convert to the doctrines of Malthus; and as he disdained to inculcate a moral restraint that he did not practice, he would not have held himself warranted to marry, if the incompetency of his means rendered it probable that the community might be burthened to support his family, should he have one. This consideration alone, by whatever temptations to love he might have been assailed, would have deterred him from bestowing his affections upon a person no richer than himself; but in the case of Miss Welbeck, whose father was notoriously wealthy, such an objection could not apply. Lamentably deficient in worldly wisdom, and considering rather the abstract fitness of things, than the usages of society, especially of the opulent, he deemed it fortunate that Welbeck

could help out his scanty income with such a portion to Emily as might raise it to a competency. What its amount should be, was to himself perfectly indifferent ; upon this point he was willing to refer every thing to the generosity of Welbeck, or the wishes of his daughter ; and knowing himself to be utterly incapable of fostering a single sordid or selfish thought, it never entered into the contemplation of the single-hearted Henry, that such motives might be imputed to him, or that there could be any impropriety in his becoming a candidate for Miss Welbeck's hand.

Sanctioned as he thus considered it to be by principle, as well as favoured by circumstances, he abandoned himself to the fascinating impulses of a first love, though not without occasionally feeling its anxieties and misgivings. Rumours of Emily's intended marriage to Lord Fawley had not been whispered about the neighbourhood without reaching his ear, for he had now become inquisitive as to every thing that bore reference to his passion ; but the report of his Lordship's alarming illness and in-

tended departure for the continent, dispelled his apprehensions; nor could he believe that Emily, the very soul of sincerity and truth, if she had been betrothed to another, would have bestowed upon him those little tokens of preference and regard, which, however unimportant in their nature, and however consistent with the most bashful modesty and reserve, carried a sweet and secret conviction to his heart, that he was not altogether indifferent to her.

His confidence in the integrity of his mistress was soon to be put to a severer trial than any that might arise from the circulation of these blind rumours. Mrs. Penguin, whose criminal passion had been daily gathering strength since Henry had become an inmate of Grotto-house, and whose faculties were sharpened by suspicion, was not long in discovering the secret attraction that carried him so often to visit the Welbecks, of which she had no sooner detected the real motive, than with all the vindictive eagerness of disappointment and jealousy, she resolved to ruin his hopes, although she deemed them too preposterous to succeed, even without her in-

tervention. In prosecution of this design, she lost no opportunity of maligning Emily, stigmatizing her as a poor, moping, melancholy, mean-spirited, insipid girl, who would in all probability inherit the madness to which her father was unquestionably subject at times, and who had formed, as it was confidently whispered, an improper attachment to some low fellow, which was the real cause of that dejection of spirits under which she was continually labouring. Notwithstanding this *penchant*, Mrs. Penguin represented her engagement to Lord Fawley as an indisputable fact, adding, that she had herself frequently heard old Welbeck declare she should marry none but a nobleman; and concluding with an expression of her amazement that any decent person should be tempted by the daughter's expected portion to connect himself with such a man as the father, whose suspected misdeeds might one day be brought to light, and plunge all his family into ignominy. For several weeks did she prosecute a daily attack of this nature, either by direct calumny or slanderous insinuation, not omitting

in the mean time any of those seductive lures which might most effectually check his growing attachment for Emily, by engaging him in an intrigue at Grotto-house. Judging, however, of his mistress by his own honest heart, his confidence in her purity and truth were not to be shaken, and as these became confirmed in his mind, the more did he despise the motives, and the more effectually was his heart steeled against the blandishments of her unprincipled libeller.

These malicious accusations, therefore, did not constitute that severe trial of his trust to which we have alluded, and which sprang from the following circumstances. All those walks and wanderings with Mrs. Penguin, to which he had at first lent himself, from a belief in their perfect harmlessness, he had studiously avoided, as soon as a vague apprehension of her real object began to fill him with misgivings. An invitation, however, to walk over, with herself and Penguin, to an exhibition of archery on Boldre Heath, there was no reason to decline, and he accordingly accompanied them, chatting

with the geologist upon his favourite topic, for the lady seldom took any notice of Henry in the presence of her husband. They had scarcely reached the entrance of the Forest, when she sent back Penguin to fetch some article of dress which she had purposely forgotten, and he was no sooner out of sight, than turning to Henry, she took his arm, and leading him hastily into a cross-path, exclaimed with an earnestness of manner that showed her to be under the influence of some vehement excitement, "Henry, my dear Henry ! you shall now find that I am your best friend, that I have your interest at heart, that I would save you from being made the dupe of a sly, artful, designing, bad girl. I hate all these demure sanctified chits, that look as if butter wouldn't melt in their mouths, though they are no better than they should be ; and if ever there was a crafty baggage of this sort, it is Emily Welbeck. Nay now, don't start and shake your head, but tell me what are your plans and intentions, if, indeed, you have ever given the matter a moment's serious reflection. Do you imagine that a stubborn, unfeeling,

mad, and yet ambitious old wretch like Welbeck, who has set his heart on making his daughter a peeress, will ever consent to her marrying an obscure, fortuneless person like you? Not he! he would see her lying dead at his feet first. Would you marry her without his consent, and reduce her to beggary; for in that case he would bequeath her nothing but his curse?"

"God forbid!" ejaculated Henry.

"Cannot you then see that you are yielding yourself to a hopeless project; that she herself must be perfectly aware of this; that she knows your marriage to be impossible; that she is only deluding and making a fool of you, if, indeed, she have not worse designs, which I forbear from mentioning?"

"Emily Welbeck is no coquet; she is incapable of heartless flirtation; she would not trifle with the feelings of any man."

"If she is no coquet, she may still be a wanton; if she cannot flirt, she is at all events not incapable of an intrigue. Well, well, I see by your reddening cheeks, and your kindling eyes

that you are incredulous, that you are indignant, that you won't hear another word. Be it so; I will say no more; I don't want to abuse the little artful hussy, but to disabuse you. I presume you will believe the evidence of your own eyes, and that is the reason why I have brought you hither."

"If it be your vain hope to persuade me, that Emily Welbeck is a profligate and a wanton, you are throwing away both time and trouble. Nothing can ever make me credit so monstrous an assertion, and we may as well therefore return to the path that we have quitted."

"Hang me, if you shall!" cried Mrs. Penguin, grasping his arm more firmly, and dragging him forward, while her countenance became inflamed with jealousy and passion. "You *shall* be made a spectator of her shame! yes, by Heaven, you shall! And if you then choose to continue her dupe, her gull, her cully, you must be the fondest fool in all Hampshire! Forgive me, dear Henry, if I am vexed and angry at your infatuation, it is not on my own

account, but entirely from my attachment—I mean my regard for your honour and happiness. I told you that Emily Welbeck was in love with some low adventurer, who has been for some time skulking about the Forest, and whose occupation cannot be an honest one, since he seems always afraid to show his face.”

“You did advance this incredible charge, and I indignantly denied it then, as I do now. I would stake my life upon Emily’s purity.”

“Then you would lose it, foolish and credulous Henry! for by means of a servant recently discarded from the Manor-house, I have learnt beyond all possibility of doubt, that she meets her lover every Thursday morning, and that yonder little open lawn, the very spot we are now approaching, is their place of assignation. This, too, is their hour of meeting. Here is a hollow, old oak, big enough to hold us both, and with fissures in the trunk that may enable us to command the lawn without being ourselves discovered. In! in! and if we do not soon see the whey-faced little Jezabel steal from the covert, and fly into the arms of her low-lived

paramour, I will never ask you to believe another word that I utter ; and you may continue, if you like, to imagine the loose and designing Emily, to be an honest and respectable girl."

Thus taken by surprise, Henry found himself ensconced within the hollow tree, and Mrs. Penguin pressing close behind him, before he had time to reflect upon the motives with which she had conducted him thither, or the avowed object of his concealment. As these presented themselves to his mind, he had resolved, in the first instance, to humour the wishes of his companion, in order that, by proving the falsehood of the information which she had received from the discarded servant—for of its truth not even the shadow of a suspicion ever flitted athwart his mind—he might convince her of her groundless and ungenerous prejudice, and silence a system of calumny, not less revolting to himself, than injurious to its object. For a moment, he had felt bound to remain where he was, out of consideration for the fair fame of his mistress ; but when he reflected upon what was due to himself, when he called to mind that he

was acting the unworthy part of a spy, and of a spy, too, upon one whose character ought to place her far, far above the reach of suspicion, a self-reproaching blush at his own want of confidence reddened every feature, and he exclaimed, with a petulance into which he was very rarely betrayed, "Not a minute, not a moment longer will I consent to act this ungenerous part; let me pass, Madam, or I will force my way out."

"You shall kill me first!—not even force, while I have life remaining to prevent you, shall enable you to escape. I have brought you to this spot to save you, to convince you of your infatuation, and I swear by Heaven that you shall not stir a step till I have succeeded!"

Henry listened and gazed in utter astonishment, for she spoke with a fierce desperation, and the energy of passion with which her face was distorted, proved that she was not acting a part, that she firmly believed what she had asserted, and would never, unless by an exertion of superior force, be wrenched from the spot until

the crisis she was expecting had arrived. For a short time he was irresolute how to act; by her heaving bosom and agitated frame he saw that her feelings were in too high a state of excitement to suffer her to be influenced by arguments or commands, and he was about to soothe her, by gentle entreaties, that she would be composed, that she would resume the path they had quitted, and await the return of Penguin, when her restless eyes, which had been eagerly and incessantly peering through the clefts of the tree, suddenly flashed with malicious triumph, her features relaxed into a spiteful smile, and she burst into a low whispering laugh, at the conclusion of which she ejaculated, in a sudden voice, "There! there! will you believe me another time? Will you credit your eyes? Look! look!"

Gazing in the direction of her distended and riveted eyes, Henry beheld a low chaise, drawn by a sorry horse, emerging from the alley of turf that opened into the little lawn. It was driven by a man muffled up in a shaggy great-coat, his hat slouched over his eyes, and a

coloured handkerchief around his throat, who stopped the vehicle as soon as he came to the entrance of the lawn, and gazed searchingly upon the surrounding coverts, as if expecting to be joined by some one whom he had appointed to meet him.

“That is the low-lived lover!” exclaimed Mrs. Penguin, in an almost breathless whisper, “he is looking out for his sweetheart, for your phoenix, your paragon, your immaculate Miss Emily!”

“This is rather some poacher, or deer-stealer, who comes hither to meet his comrade,” replied Henry; “Emily Welbeck would not even speak to such a fellow as this. Come, let us steal away, for it may be dangerous to spoil his sport.”

“But I *will* spoil his sport, and hers too, the wanton hussy! or I will die for it! Nay, you are my prisoner still, you shall not stir an inch. If you had a hundred daggers at my heart, I would not give way to you. Hark! listen! listen!”

Again turning his eyes towards the stranger

in the chaise, Henry saw him put a whistle to his mouth, and blow upon it gently ; shortly after which he heard a rustling in one of the adjacent coverts, from which a female emerged, and ran hastily towards the vehicle. It was Emily Welbeck ! he could not be mistaken ; he recognized her face distinctly, and his surprise was quickly increased to such an unutterable amazement, as almost to make him distrust the evidence of his senses, when he saw the stranger, as she stepped into the vehicle, kiss and embrace her, and place her by his side, immediately after which he turned the chaise round, and drove along the turf into the recesses of the Forest with all the speed to which he could urge his horse.

Mrs. Penguin, overcome by the intensity of excitement to which she had been wrought by jealousy and hatred, leaned back against the tree, wearing, however, a look of malicious triumph, as she gaspingly exclaimed, “ There ! there ! are you satisfied ? have you seen enough ?—I will release you now. My dear Henry !” she continued, after a pause, in which

she had a little recovered herself, "I am sure you will forgive my vehemence, my rudeness. It sprung solely from my sincere regard for you. I was determined to save you from the snares of this demure-looking, but good-for-nothing, abominable girl. Thank God! I have succeeded. Come, we will go and look for Penguin." She leaned upon his arm, pressing it to her side with renewed exclamations of her joy at her having unmasked the profligate Emily, as they walked back towards the spot where she had parted from her husband. Henry, whose blood had been thrown into a sudden ferment, while his heart had sank within him at the spectacle just presented to his eyes, walked on for some time in silence, bewildered and almost stupified at the greatness of his first surprise, and at the crowd of conjectures and surmises that besieged his brain. As he recovered his faculties, however, he indignantly spurned from him the misgivings that had shot and thrilled through his bosom, under the influence of the electrical shock it had just received. In the uprightness of his own heart,

he invariably put the most charitable constructions upon the actions of others; he would condemn no one unheard; in all cases he would cling to the belief of innocence, until guilt was incontestably established; and the gentle, bashful, pure-hearted, and high-minded Emily should never be torn from his affections while there was a possibility or a hope of her innocence, to which he might cling. "All that I have witnessed," he said, rather thinking aloud, than addressing his companion, "startling, astounding, incomprehensible as it is, may yet be capable of explanation. I will question Emily; nothing but her own confession shall convince me of her guilt."

"My dear Henry! what explanation do you require? Is it not a manifest assignation? The timid, bashful Emily, steals without a companion from her father's house, and hides herself in the lonely depths of the forest. What object *could* she have but to intrigue with this low ruffian? Did you not see how the fellow kissed and hugged her! Pah! the forward slut! Confession, indeed! Do you imagine that the girl who has acted in this way would scruple

at a lie to conceal her shame? There may be good reasons for her wanting a husband, but after what you have seen you will hardly be such a gull and gudgeon as to fall into the trap that she may set for you, however artfully she may bait it."

"I confess that I am staggered, overwhelmed by my utter inability even to guess at any plausible solution of what I have seen; but still I cling to my confidence in Emily, who is alike incapable of perpetrating a misdeed, or of attempting to support it by falsehood. Were she what you have represented her to be, all trust in female honour and purity would for ever be banished from my mind, and I could almost believe that angels themselves might sin. I will question her, I will question her."

"Do so, and if her confusion do not confirm her guilt, my name is not Laura Penguin! and if you are bamboozled by her flimsy pretences, your name, henceforward and for ever, should be Henry the Gull. See! I no sooner talk of addle-pates, than one of them turns up. Yonder comes Penguin. Let us say nothing to him of

what has occurred, for he is such a chatterbox, that the story would be all over the village in half an hour, and bad as the hussy is, I don't want to expose her publicly, till you have yourself satisfied your mind as to her real character."

The husband joined them as she concluded, when Mrs. Penguin, who had merely invited Henry to see the archery at Boldre Heath, as a decoy to draw him to the place of assignation between Emily and the stranger, and who had not the least wish to proceed any farther, now that she had accomplished her object, pretended fatigue and indisposition, a plea which the sudden paleness left by her recent agitation served to confirm, and proposed that they should return. Henry gladly acquiesced, for he was in no mood for seeing sports and pastimes, nor did he speak, except in monosyllables, on their way back to Grotto-house.

Henry's state of mind during the remainder of this day, and the following sleepless night, we shall not attempt to pourtray. He felt that the happiness of his whole life was at stake; for if he should have been deceived as to Emily, he

foresaw that he should never again have confidence in human integrity ; that the remainder of his career would be a painful wading through the slough of despondency and hopelessness. At times, his bosom would swell with the conviction that she could explain every thing to his perfect satisfaction, and her own entire exculpation ; and then again fear would flutter about his heart, like a bird of ill omen, fanning it cold with its wings. True love is exquisitely sensitive, distrustful of its own merits, and therefore prone to jealous doubts and misgivings. Although he did not respect Mrs. Penguin, and was far from trusting all her assertions, much that she had said remained rankling in his memory. There might be reasons why Emily, considering that her father was occasionally half-deranged, and was vehemently suspected to have committed some undetected deed of darkness, might become his agent in secretly meeting and communicating with the instruments whom he had employed. Some such confidential mission might have been the cause of that mysterious assignation in the forest, of

which he had been a recent spectator; a theory, however, which was quickly dashed to the ground, when he recollected that, however imperatively she might be bound to meet a man of low stamp and station, there could be no reason why she should run to encounter him with manifest joy, why he should eagerly kiss and embrace her, and above all, why she should submit to his caresses, and suffer herself to be carried into the recesses of the forest without the smallest visible repugnance. This last was a damning fact, which it baffled all his ingenuity to explain, and the result of his futile and tormenting conjectures was such as might have been anticipated from his frank, straightforward, and decided character. He determined to seize the first moment for demanding an explanation from Emily, to state candidly what he had so unintentionally discovered, and if she could account for it in a way satisfactory to her honour, and calculated to banish every misgiving from his mind, to confess his attachment, and make her an offer of his heart and hand. Should she be unable to clear up the mystery, and vindicate

the perfect purity of her character, an alternative which he hardly thought possible, his mind was definitively made up as to the course he should pursue. He would not any longer compromise his feelings and his happiness by maintaining an intimacy that could conduce to no satisfactory result, and however painful might be the struggle, however desolate a separation under such circumstances might render his heart, he would bid her adieu, breathe a prayer for her happiness, and never again pass the threshold of the Manor-house.

Not less prompt in executing, than firm in making his resolves, he was on the point of setting out to carry his intentions into immediate execution, when Mrs. Penguin entered the room. All the storm of agitation by which her countenance had been darkened on the previous afternoon had now passed away ; she had decorated her person to the best advantage, and wearing the most bewitching smile she could assume, she exclaimed, as she held out her hand, “ My dear Henry ! I am come to ask your pardon a second time for my foolish violence yesterday ;

but I was carried away by my feelings, which are always strong, sometimes ungovernable; but as you know my motives were good, I hope you have forgiven me. Are we once more friends?"

"We have never been otherwise," said Henry, taking the proffered hand, but not returning the tender pressure with which it encountered his own: "I am grateful for the interest you take in my happiness; and, however painful may be the doubts you have awakened in my bosom, I am not the less indebted to you for giving me an opportunity of coming to an explicit understanding with Emily."

"You will find her out; sly as she is, you will find her out, and will thank me to your dying day for having opened your eyes. I feel that I have rendered you an important service, and I have therefore the less hesitation in stating that I am come to ask a favour of you."

"The wife of my good and hospitable friend Penguin, will, I am sure, ask nothing of me that I shall not most readily grant," replied Henry.

“The case is this,” resumed Mrs. Penguin, unfolding some papers which she had in her hand.—“I have an imprudent, I should rather say, an unfortunate relation, whom Penguin has repeatedly assisted by sums of money, which have been insufficient to extricate him from his embarrassments. He is again in trouble—in fact arrested, and will be locked up in prison, to the utter ruin of his affairs, and the great distress of his family, unless some friend will join him in a bond for payment of the debt, which may safely be done; for in three weeks or a month, as he most solemnly assures me in this letter, his resources will become available, and enable him to discharge the debt without assistance from any one. I pledged myself to Penguin, when he made the last advance, not to trouble him again, at least not for the present, with fresh applications, and as nothing should be held so sacred as a promise of this sort, I cannot violate it. Now, my dear Henry, if you will sign this bond, (it is a mere matter of form,) after my relation’s attorney, who is below,

has inserted your name in it, you will not only oblige me in a very particular manner, but serve a worthy man, whose difficulties are only of a temporary nature, and to whom you may therefore extend this favour without a shadow of risk."

"Is your relation quite confident of being enabled to discharge the amount, if a little time be granted him?"

"Oh! I will answer for his punctuality; there cannot be a doubt of it, and if by any possibility he should be disappointed, I must e'en apply to Penguin, who will, of course, come forward and pay it."

"Under such circumstances," said the confiding Henry, thus taken by surprise, "I shall be most happy to oblige you, and serve, at the same time, one whom you describe to be a worthy, though unfortunate man."

"The best creature breathing, and honest as the day. A thousand thanks, my dear Henry! you have made me your friend for ever, and you will oblige me still more by not mentioning the affair at present to Pen-

guin. There is no necessity for this just now, though I will tell him all about it by and by."

Henry signed the bond, promised not to mention the transaction to any one, and having received a profusion of the warmest acknowledgments from Mrs. Penguin, set off on foot towards the Manor-house, revolving in his mind a hundred different modes of commencing the delicate explanations with Emily, satisfied with none that suggested themselves, but not the less firmly resolved to bring the affair to an immediate and conclusive issue.

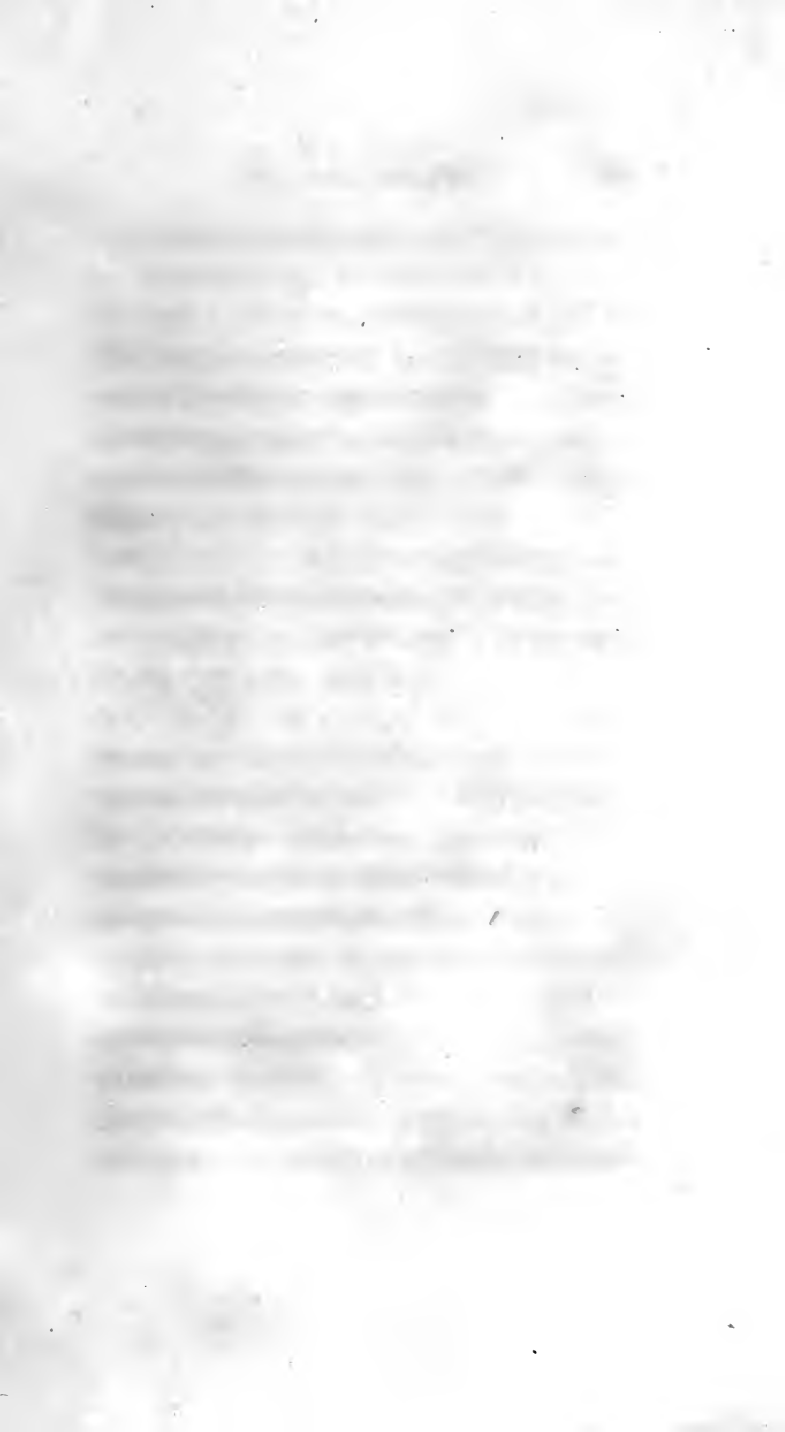
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